Saturday November 11 1995

Abu Dhabi D 8.50 Albania L 220 Andorra FF 10 Austria AS 28 Bahrain BD 0.80 Belgium BF 80 Bulgaria L 170 Croatia KN 12.60 Cyprus CC 0.90 Czech Republic KC45 Denmark DK 14 Dubai D 8.50 Egypt EK 5 Estonia K 30 Finland FM 11 France FF 10 Germany DM 3.50 Greece D 350 Hong Kong HK$ 23 Hungary F 185 Iceland IK 185 India Rs 55 Israel NIS 8.90 Italy L 2,800 Jordan JD 1.00 Kuwait KD 0.50 Latvia US$ 2 Lebanon US$ 1.50 Lithuania US$ 2 Luxembourg LF 55 Madeira E 250 Malta ML 0.43 Morocco D 15 Netherlands G 3.75 Norway NK 16 Oman OR 1.00 Pakistan R 70 Poland Z 5.70 Portugal E 230 Qatar QR 8.50 Russia US$ 2.00 Saudi Arabia R 10 Slovakia SK 55 Slovenia SLT 260 Spain P 200 Sweden SK 15 Switzerland SF 3 Thailand B 80 Tunisia TD 1,750 Turkey TL 100,000 Ukraine US$ 2.00 USA US$ 2.75

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,396

Sport

Hakkinen in coma after crash

This section page 11

Other Lives

When suits do battle with anoraks

Outlook page 15

Interview

Paul Theroux (Not as grumpy as he reads)

Outlook page 17

Demand for sanctions after hanging of Saro-Wiwa and fellow activists

Nigeria defies world with writer's 'judicial murder'

Ian Black in Auckland, Owen Bowcott and John Vidal

NIGERIA catapulted itself into international pariah status yesterday when the military regime defied international clamour for clemency and executed the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa along with eight other environmental activists.

The hangings in a prison in Port Harcourt prompted a wave of worldwide condemnation, demands for sanctions and for the country to be expelled from the Commonwealth, which is holding its heads of government summit in New Zealand.

The outrage was mingled with tributes to Saro-Wiwa from numerous literary figures and the groundswell of a boycott campaign which may also be directed against the Anglo-Dutch petroleum company Shell. A fairer shareout of the company's profits from its Ogoniland operations and complaints about pollution sparked the protest movement which Saro-Wiwa led.

"Shell has blood on its hands. Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged for speaking out against Shell. He was trying to secure the most basic of human rights the right to clean air, land and water," said Lord Melchett, chairman of Greenpeace UK. The pressure group is to discuss joint action with Friends of the Earth shortly.

News of the executions, carried out while most Commonwealth leaders were asleep in Auckland, delivered a body blow to the organisation.

The South African president, Nelson Mandela, who hours before was counselling for a cautious approach, swiftly shifted position and announced he would recommend Nigeria's expulsion from the Commonwealth pending the installation of a democratic government.

John Major said: "I said yesterday I thought this was a fraudulent trial, a bad verdict. It has now been followed by judicial murder. I do not see how Nigeria can stay in the Commonwealth until they return to democratic government. This will be an acid test."

Labour's Foreign Affairs spokesman, Robin Cook, called for an arms embargo and a freeze on the military leaders' personal bank accounts.

Writers round the world joined the condemnation, including William Boyd, Arthur Miller, Chinua Achebe, Harold Pinter and Ben Okri.

All nine Ogoni activists had been condemned to death after a short trial on October 31 in which they were denied their choice of defence lawyers. International observers condemned the proceedings in the southern city of Port Harcourt as unjust and legally flawed.

Saro-Wiwa and the others were accused of complicity in the murder of four pro-government Ogoni tribal chiefs in 1994.

The death sentences were confirmed by Nigeria's Provisional Ruling Council a week later. On Thursday evening the wives of the condemned men tried to take in a meal to their husbands but were not allowed into the prison.

"Oh God, what am I going to do? He is the only thing I have in the whole world," sobbed Hauwa Saro-Wiwa at a news conference in Port Harcourt later that night.

The Ogoni Community Association, a British-based organisation supporting Ken Saro-Wiwa, said an eyewitness saw him and the eight others moved to Port Harcourt's main jail yesterday morning. "They had chains round their ankles," a spokesman, Cliff Ettridge, said. "Troops have continued to build up in Ogoniland prior to any possible riots."

The hangings were carried out around 11.30am local time. Their corpses were buried four hours later.

The regime's message is that it will not be swayed by foreign powers and that it will not tolerate dissent in Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa's largest oil-producer and most populous country.

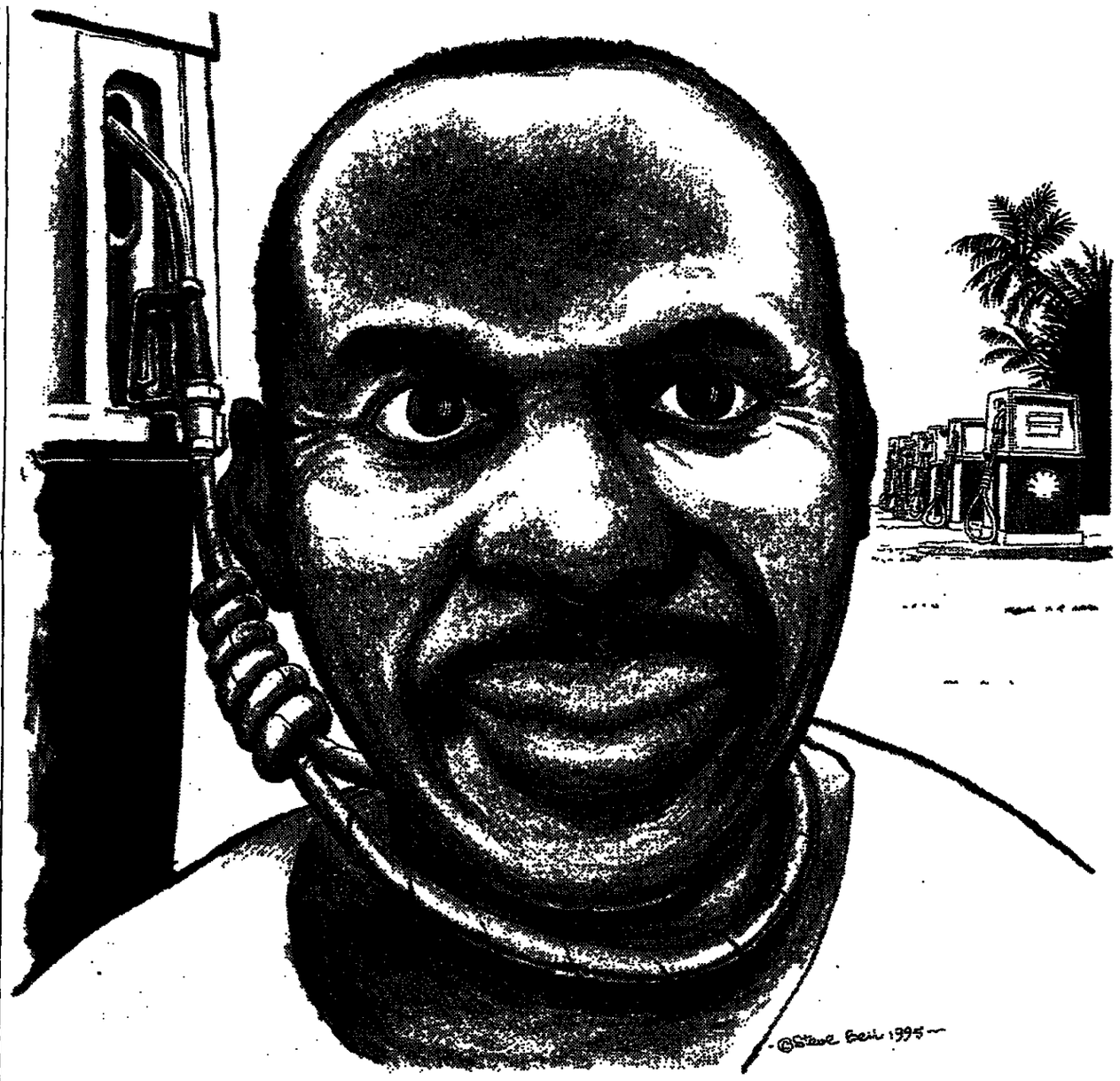
Tom Ikimi, Nigeria's foreign minister, had made clear that his country was not prepared to face an inquisition and he has the tacit support of several African states which fear a precedent that might one day be used against them.

Trade or oil sanctions against Nigeria would hit the economy hard. It would also severely damage British commercial interests. In the first seven months of the year, Nigeria sold £77 million worth of goods to Britain. British exports to Nigeria, however, stood at £250 million.

Shell said in a statement from its London headquarters last night it received the news of the activists' deaths with deep regret. Shell said it had publicly appealed for the condemned men to be spared.

Saro-Wiwa's son, Ken Wiwa Jr, called on the United Nations to suspend Nigeria and urged the world to impose oil sanctions.

Reports, page 7; Leader comment, Outlook page 14; Obituary, Outlook page 20



"Nigeria must be expelled forthwith from the Commonwealth and subjected to immediate international sanctions following yesterday's act of murderous barbarism. The Commonwealth will destroy its very nature if it continues to give sanctuary to the amoral thugs responsible for the outrage . . . timed to occur just as the Commonwealth conference was getting under way in Auckland" Leader comment, page 14

The death of Saro-Wiwa is only Nigeria's most recent wound. And she will receive many more until she is delivered from a dictatorship so contemptuous of the well-being of her people and of world opinion.
Chinua Achebe, leading Nigerian novelist

The focus now should be on transforming Nigeria, and using this energy and this rage towards improving the conditions of the Nigerian people
Ben Okri

Nigeria is now on a similar level of moral degeneracy as Saddam Hussein's Iraq.
William Boyd, who was brought up in Nigeria

The outrage of the literary community will reverberate for years to come
Arthur Miller

This is Heart of Darkness country
Fay Weldon

Murder is the most brutal form of censorship
Harold Pinter

Government plans to drop inheritance tax may limit public's access to artworks

Richard Thomas

JOHN Major's plans to scrap inheritance tax threaten the Inland Revenue's unlikeliest role as custodian of the nation's artistic heritage, ensuring public access to works by the likes of Alfred Sisley, Thomas Gainsborough and J.M.W. Turner, art experts said yesterday. The owners of more than 14,000 works — including one government minister, Nicholas Soames — are exempted from estate duty on condition they make their art possessions available for temporary exhibitions or to individuals by appointment.

Rumours that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will use his budget in a fortnight's time to abolish the tax have sent tremors through galleries around the country.

Without the financial incentive that the scheme provides, works of art passed on in future would almost certainly remain behind closed doors. Although experts recognise that the man on the Clapham Omnibus is probably oblivious to the list's existence, most galleries acknowledge that the system ensures at least some access.

John Murdoch, director of the galleries at the Courtauld Institute, London, said: "The removal of inheritance tax would be of enormous and far-reaching concern, particularly to galleries and museums. "It is a flawed system, but none the less an extremely valuable one."

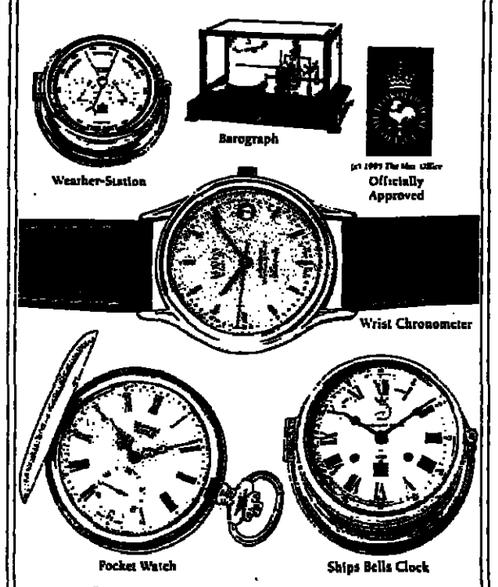
The possible tax break has been attacked as a hand-out to the rich, and the aristocracy does litter the list of owners. But many ordinary family heirlooms, ranging from snuff boxes to salt cellars, also qualify.

In an attempt to defuse criticism and promote openness, the Revenue has computerised the register — dubbed the "V&A list" after the museum where the original was kept.

Teams of summer staff also conduct regular audits to check that pieces are available for viewing.

Family silver seldom seen, page 24

IF WE HAD THE WHOLE PAGE WE'D SHOW YOU THE WHOLE RANGE.



SEWILLS NAUTICAL COLLECTION

Extensive range of 93 exquisite instruments mastercrafted from the finest materials.

Featuring our time-honoured Ships Clocks & Barometers, Barographs and Wrist/Pocket Watches.

All with full 5 year guarantee, whilst today our weather instruments alone carry The Met. Office seal of approval.

Prices ranging from £50 to £1,000.

Free New 28 page colour brochure on request.

PHONE 0151-708 0099
FAX 0151-708 6777

SEWILLS
Maker to the Admiralty. Estd 1800ad
20 Britannia Pavilion, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AA

NGU42 Post to, Sewills, FREEPOST, Liverpool L69 3BR
NAME
ADDRESS
POSTCODE

Inside
World news 2
Weather 2
Focus 5
Sport 8
Crossword 12

Outlook
Comment 14
Other Lives 15
Letters 16
Interview 17
Arts 18
Comfort 19
Obituaries 20
Money 21
Financial News 22
European Business 23

45
9 770261 307262

UN women 'forced' to stay home

Barbara Crossette

WOMEN are being forced out of United Nations work places in Afghanistan because self-appointed conservative Islamic councils are threatening to attack them and the offices.

In Jalalabad, where UN agencies are caring for more than 100,000 Afghans recovering from civil war, at least three UN offices have kept women home rather than risk the collapse of their programs, officials said.

Taliban, the orthodox Islamic movement which has been gathering strength in much of the country, is said to be behind the effort to keep women — from office cleaners to engineers, teachers and health workers — at home.

The enforcers are local groups called *shuras*, which are mobilising mobs to assault women on their way to work at international agencies or volunteer organisations and sack the offices that employ them, officials said.

Peter Hansen, head of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, said some Afghan women were continuing to work at home or were on paid leave. But he acknowledged that the women risked losing their jobs permanently.

He said the confrontation posed a "terrible dilemma" for UN agencies including the High Commissioner for Refugees and Unicef.

Private organisations working in Afghanistan and human rights groups are outraged by what they see as the UN's willingness to abandon women for the sake of relations with religious conservatives.

"It doesn't shock us so much what the Afghans do," said Surita Sandosham, executive director of Equality Now, a New-York-based group that helps women organise rights campaigns around the world. "What is shocking is that UN bodies are acquiescing."

Equality Now has lobbied to take the case to the UN Human Rights Committee.

In a letter to the committee, Pamela Collett of the Pakistan-Afghanistan field office of Save the Children, said: "The question is, should UN agencies continue programming which benefits only males and/or employs only males in accordance with the shuras' decrees?"

Mr Hansen, who recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan, said he had met with militants who control of the southern city of Kandahar to discuss reports that they had closed all schools to girls.

He said he had told them that women's rights were human rights and that unless they accepted international norms, they would lose international support. He said they had assured him that girls would get an education in keeping religious practice.

Ms Collett said in her letter to the Human Rights Committee: "As it is the Taliban's particular interpretation of Islam which they have used to justify restricting women to the home," she wrote, "this assurance that Hansen received does not guarantee that women's and girls' rights will be acknowledged."

The Taliban have captured several Afghan cities and are poised to attack Kabul, the capital. But things in government-held areas are not much better, women's groups said. — New York Times.

Some of the 60 prisoners from the rebel Revolutionary United Front languish in government army headquarters in Freetown, Sierra Leone, yesterday. The five-year civil war has caused 10,000 deaths PHOTOGRAPH: JEAN-MARC BOUJU

Unicef stops work in areas where girls' schools closed

THE United Nations children's agency, Unicef, announced yesterday it was suspending help for education programmes in Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan, where girls' schools were being closed.

"The principle of non-discrimination has guided Unicef's work since its inception when the organisation decided that its assistance would only be provided if it could benefit children on all sides of a political conflict," Unicef said.

The spokeswoman, Marie Heuze, said the move was limited to the south and west around Jalalabad and Herat.

Unicef was negotiating with the Taliban, "for the resumption of educational opportunities for all girls," Ms Heuze said.

She said Unicef employed 23 women in Afghanistan. "It has neither terminated nor restricted their movements, not does it intend to do so," she said. — Reuter.

News in brief

Army resumes push against Tamil Tigers

SRI LANKAN troops backed by armour and artillery resumed a push against Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern peninsula yesterday in fighting that killed more than 90 people and wounded almost 300, the army said. Twelve soldiers and one officer were killed and 77 soldiers wounded.

A senior army source said troops advanced at dawn and met no resistance from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for the first 100 yards. "Then they started firing at us and giving it maximum," he said.

There was heavy fighting on the outskirts of Jaffna, the heart of Tamil Eelam (the name with no country), in the Urumpirai and Kopai North areas, where the army had to clear rebel bunkers. The districts were later captured. The army said troops advanced one-and-a-half miles. — *Reuter, Colombo.*

Fury over Ayatollah Alain

WITH THE fury of politicians scorned, sacked women ministers have lashed out at the male chauvinism of Alain Juppé, the French prime minister, nicknamed Ayatollah Alain by the opposition because he blamed feminine influence for his government's failures. After hearing that Mr Juppé described his female colleagues as *amateurs* and *pétasses* (old biddies), the eight conservative women former ministers dismissed on Tuesday plan to form a solidarity lobby with feminist MPs.

They also have the support of some conservative male party leaders who have been shamed by Mr Juppé's rudeness, which Yvette Roudy, the Socialist former women affairs minister, said was "inbred misogyny". — *Paul Webster, Paris.*

Mother-in-law of all hoaxes

A TELEPHONED bomb threat that forced a Jordanian airliner to land in Iceland came from a woman trying to stop her mother-in-law from visiting her in Chicago, an airline spokesman said yesterday. The Lockheed TriStar flight RJA 263 was en route from Amsterdam to Chicago on Thursday when a caller to a Royal Jordanian Airlines office in Chicago said a woman on board was carrying a bomb. "She didn't want her mother-in-law to come to Chicago," said Monib Tukaan, an airline spokesman.

The mother-in-law was travelling with her newly wed daughter and husband, who were going to Chicago on their honeymoon, police in Iceland said. — *Reuter, Reykjavik.*

Sweden's deputy PM resigns

SWEDEN'S deputy prime minister, Mona Sahlin, until recently firm favourite to succeed Ingvar Carlsson as prime minister next year, resigned yesterday amid allegations of financial impropriety. Ms Sahlin, under criminal investigation for using a government credit card for private purchases, said she was withdrawing from the race to take over from Mr Carlsson, who steps down in March.

The announcement plunged the ruling Social Democrats into disarray as Ms Sahlin was the sole leadership candidate. Aged 38, she would have been Sweden's youngest prime minister, and the first woman to hold the post. — *Greg McIvor, Stockholm*

The weather in Europe

Forecast for the cities

Today / Tomorrow / Monday / Tuesday

Around the world

Lunchtime yesterday (previous day in Americas)

European weather outlook

Scandinavia:
A waving front will bring rain and hill snow to parts of Denmark, southern Sweden and southern Finland. Elsewhere it should be fine and frosty with a little sunshine once any early freezing fog clears. Maximum temperatures in a large range from 8 degrees in Copenhagen to -12 degrees in the far north.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:
Most places will have a rather cloudy but very mild and mostly dry day, although a little drizzle is likely in the Low Countries and the odd shower is possible in Alpine regions. Maximum temperatures 11 to 16 degrees.

France:
There should be plenty of dry weather this morning but rain will reach western districts and spread slowly eastwards during the afternoon, although eastern parts of France should escape the rain and stay dry till after dark. Maximum temperatures 14 to 18 degrees, locally higher in the extreme south.

Spain and Portugal:
Many areas will catch some heavy showers and thunderstorms today, including southern and eastern Spain. Maximum temperatures 15 to 19 degrees.

Italy:
A shower is just possible in the far north but the majority of Italy will have another dry day with early mist clearing to allow some sunny periods. Maximum temperatures 15 to 20 degrees.

Greece:
High pressure continues to control the weather and should mean several days of sunshine, but it may turn unsettled again by Tuesday or Wednesday. Maximum temperatures 15 to 20 degrees

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1

8.25am News; Weather. 8.30 SuperTed. 8.40 Willy Fogg. 9.05 The Addams Family. 9.30 The New Adventures Of *Superman*. 10.15 *Live And Kicking*. 12.15 The Lord Mayor's Show. 1.12 Weather. 1.15 Grandstand. 6.20 News, Weather. 6.30 Regional News And [illegible]

6.01 Weekend. 6.30 Animals Of Power. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Science in Action. 8.00 World News. 8.05 From Our Own Correspondent. 8.25 Book Choice. 8.30 Counterpoint. 9.00 *Newshour*. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 Meridian. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Play of the Week: Last Supper. [illegible]

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1

8.05am Match Of The Day — The Road To Wembley. 9.15 Discovering Eve. 9.30 Breakfast With Frost. 10.30 For Valour. 11.00 See Hear! 11.30 Remembrance Sunday — The Cenotaph. 12.55 Tomorrow Today. 1.00 CountryFile. 1.30 News; On The Record. 2.30 EastEnders. 3.55 FILM: [illegible]

Letter From America. 4.00 News Summary. 4.05 Sports Roundup. 4.15 The Fallen. 5.00 World News. 5.15 Fourth Estate. 5.30 (MW) News in German. 5.30 BBC English. 5.45 (MW) News in German. 5.45 Britain Today. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 Soundbyte. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Play Of The Week. 8.30 The Ed Stewart Show. 9.00 Newshour [illegible]

Suddenly the vast majority is unwilling to gamble its precious Deutschmark on Kohl's Euro-dreams, reports **Ian Traynor** in Frankfurt

Germans balk at high price of union

'British people agonise about losing the pound. Germans have a lot more to lose than that'

BATTLE has been joined for the fate of the Deutschmark, symbol and totem of the most successful German state ever.

The Bonn-knows-best culture of German political discourse has abruptly yielded to a cacophonous and acrimonious row about a single European currency and the abandonment of the cherished mark.

"Suddenly the political elite is having second thoughts," says Norbert Walter, chief economist at Deutsche Bank, the country's biggest commercial bank. "That's the new element. The political elites were all in favour of European integration and Maastricht and now they're beginning to shy away from it."

Germans are loath to forfeit the mark, the most concrete embodiment of their country's post-war success. Every opinion poll shows a thumping majority of up to 70 per cent against trading it in for some nebulous Euro-currency.

"We Germans are more or less completely for Europe," says Edgar Piel, analyst at the Allensbacher polling institute. "But you have to add that we get a pain in the stomach at the thought of giving up the Deutschmark in two or three years. It's one of the few national symbols of which we're proud. It has the emotional dimension here that national flags have elsewhere."

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, after 13 years in power, is used to getting his way. And his way is to sacrifice the mark to hasten European political union. It is not that he wants to lose the mark, rather that he has to, as a means to the end of a European federation.

Five years ago he entrenched German unification with a controversial monetary union, giving the east Germans the mighty mark at a rate of one-to-one for their old worthless money. Now he argues that German union and European union are two sides of the same coin. That coin is no longer the Deutschmark.

But Mr Kohl has not yet won an argument which has really just begun here. He told parliament this week that European Monetary Union (EMU) cannot split "German democrats" and haughtily advised the opposition Social Democrats to end "this harmful discussion as quickly as possible".

"The body politic has just started to think about this because they realise that tough decisions are coming," says Richard Reid, executive director in Germany of Union Bank of Switzerland. "The debate has become more focused, but there's no saying which way it's going to go."

The furore erupted a couple of weeks ago when the flagging Social Democrats questioned the selection criteria for EMU, laid down in 1991's Maastricht treaty and scheduled for launch at the beginning of 1999.

The SPD leaders spoke scornfully of "monopoly money", breaking for the first time the all-party consensus that has characterised German policy on the future of the EU. The dam was breached. Since then professors, politicians and pundits have come out of the closet in an endless bout of agonising and acrimony over EMU and the mark.

The differences are not so much between the parties as within them. Despite the political point-scoring, the leaderships of Mr Kohl's Christian Democrats and Rudolf Scharping's Social Democrats are saying very similar things about the need to ensure that a future Euro-currency is as stable as the mark, that the terms for admission are rigorously applied, and that further instruments are needed to ensure this, going beyond the Maastricht agreement. A consensus remains that Germany must not relax the fitness test for EMU to meet the 1999 deadline. If need be, EMU will be postponed.

Within the parties, however, EMU-scepticism is rife. Oskar Lafontaine, the deputy SPD leader, is scathing. His criticisms are echoed on the right of Mr Kohl's governing coalition in Bavaria's Christian Social Union. It was the finance minister, Theo Waigel of the CSU, who triggered the entire controversy in September by dismissing Italy as unfit for EMU.

Dr Kohl also faces a formidable body of criticism in the think-tanks and universities. The six leading economic institutes, in their recent joint six-monthly report, urged a relaxation of the EMU terms, anathema to a government eager to persuade a nation of doubters that the terms will be so tough as to ensure the continuation of the Deutschmark by another name.

In contrast to the think-tanks, a club of economics professors is fiercely critical of the EMU project, arguing it is premature, over-hasty, ill-prepared and will wreck rather than help prospects for European integration.

In short, the consensus bubble has burst, leaving in its place an air of panic, alarmism, and apocalyptic warnings.

The Kohl camp accuses the opposition of cheap populism for daring to question Bonn's policies. But the government shares a predilection for apocalyptic predictions.

For Mr Kohl, it is a question of "war and peace" in Europe. For Klaus Kinkel, his foreign minister, no single currency means a return to the Europe of the 1930s, in other words the Germany of Adolf Hitler.

Despite the present row, the two big parties appear committed to EMU. But the fear is that after the launch there will be backsliding among the EMU partners, weakening the common currency and risking a backlash from angry Germans deprived of their beloved Deutschmark.

This is why Mr Waigel is demanding a "stability pact" among EMU candidates, and why everyone — the CDU, Mr Scharping, the Bundesbank — is calling for tighter criteria to be enshrined in binding agreements that are effectively appendices to Maastricht but preferably do not require the treaty to be reopened, for then the entire project could be derailed.

"The real German nightmare," says Mr Reid of UBS, "is that everyone tightens their belts to get into EMU then, once they're in, they relax and loosen their belts again. But you can't blame them. People in the UK agonise about losing the pound. Well, the Germans have a lot more to lose than that."

Waigel warns of financial penalties

Agencies in Bonn

EUROPEAN Union countries that join the planned currency union should face financial penalties if they don't hold to strict budget criteria, Germany's finance minister Theo Waigel insisted yesterday.

Mr Waigel told parliament he had suggested this in a paper sent to his EU colleagues.

The idea is part of a "stability pact for Europe", a series of conditions which Mr Waigel wants EU countries to meet after they merge their currencies, to keep the Euro-currency stable.

His latest proposal, revealed yesterday, is to impose financial penalties on countries whose budget deficits exceed 3 per cent of gross domestic product.

Mr Waigel called for the finance ministers of participating countries to form a European "stability council".

Excessive deficits would be tolerated only in "extremely exceptional cases", he said.

The violators would have to post a non-interest-bearing security deposit equal to 0.25 per cent of gross domestic product for each percentage point of excessive deficit above the 3 per cent limit, Mr Waigel said.

The penalties could prove costly for France, the second biggest of the half-dozen economies that analysts expect to join the monetary union in the first wave.

The other five are Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Austria.

France is struggling to get its deficit down from over 5 per cent of GDP now. With its 7,000 billion franc (£900 billion) economy, each extra percentage point would cost it 17.5 billion francs (£2.3 billion).

Governments will only get their money back if they put their public accounts in order within two years.

Otherwise the deposit will be withheld as a fine and paid into the European Union budget, Mr Waigel said.

Mr Waigel called the 3 per cent deficit-to-GDP ratio an absolute maximum and said countries must aim for "a medium-term ceiling of 1 per cent of gross domestic product in times of economic normality".

Dixons

NEW

NEW FOR CD-ROM

HEXEN FOR CD-ROM
Beyond evil. Beyond hope. Beyond heretic. Beyond any 3D game ever created. From the creators of Doom and Doom II. Dare you enter the world of Hexen?

Dixons Deal £37.99

DESTRUCTION DERBY
Drive as hard as you can in your bid to be the last car moving!
NEW FOR CD-ROM
£39.99 Dixons Deal

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 FOR CD-ROM
Ever dreamed of being Terry Venables? Here's your opportunity to manage a football team with players.
NEW
£34.99 Dixons Deal

COMMAND & CONQUER FOR PC CD-ROM
Take command of your forces and utilise all the potent electronic hardware to reduce the enemy to pulp!
NEW
£34.99 Dixons Deal

ACTUA SOCCER
This 3D football simulation features real-motion captured international footballers.
Dixons Deal £34.99

MORTAL KOMBAT 3
"Control the knowledge... Command the power!" Join the Kombatants in the most action-packed confrontation ever! NEW
Dixons Deal £37.99

FATAL RACING
The fastest racing game around – where to win means you survive! NEW
Dixons Deal £34.99

Dixons
THE BEST DEALS FOR CHRISTMAS

OVER 350 HIGH STREET BRANCHES NATIONWIDE.
TEL: 0181-200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH

Pocket-money premiums. Grown-up protection.

£100,000 cover for just £1.82 a week*

Your children depend on you for a lot more than just their pocket-money. Fortunately, you can give them – and all the family – the financial protection they'll need, should the worst happen – from as little as a few pence a day.

Allied Dunbar's straightforward term assurance can provide a substantial sum to your dependants should you die within the period insured – at a price that's real value. **Your monthly contributions can work out to be as little as £1.82 a week for each £100,000 worth of cover;** that's just 26p a day.* Even better, you may qualify for higher rate income tax relief on your contributions – meaning you can get even more protection for your money.

Which is good news for anyone bringing up a family, especially during the years when new clothes, holidays and even the weekly shopping can put a heavy burden on your income.

Why not call us now for more details and a personal quote? Alternatively, if you visit us on the Internet, you can obtain your quote (plus a free guide to Will Writing) on-line. Either way, you'll discover exactly how easy it is on the pocket to protect the ones you love.

23A

Call now for a personal quote on
0800 888 666
Any time between 7am-10pm, 7 days a week.

http://www.allieddunbar.co.uk

For the life you don't yet know

ALLIED DUNBAR

Major lays into nuclear 'idiocy'

Ian Black in Auckland

JOHN MAJOR furiously dissociated Britain yesterday from a Commonwealth statement condemning nuclear testing, even though in a remarkable feat of diplomacy the document did not mention France's controversial blasts in the south Pacific.

Minutes after the statement was issued, the Prime Minister, visibly angry at being denied the chance to explain his support for nuclear deterrence, repudiated the views of his fellow leaders as "unbalanced" and bluntly publicised his own.

In the Commonwealth statement, negotiated long and hard throughout the first day of the Auckland summit, heads of government "noted the widespread anger caused by the current programmes of nuclear weapon tests".

It added: "The overwhelming majority of heads of government condemned ... continued nuclear testing which was inconsistent with the undertaking given by the nuclear weapon states to exercise utmost restraint so as not to affect negotiations for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty."

Jim Bolger: wanted the nuclear issue out of the way

But Mr Major, replaying Margaret Thatcher's many spats with Commonwealth colleagues, said: "I think what they say in their statement is factually inaccurate, intellectually inconsistent and unbalanced. I haven't signed up for that and they know it. I've made it perfectly clear: I think the view that has been expressed by our Commonwealth colleagues is just plain wrong, just plain wrong."

As the leaders moved to their weekend retreat on New Zealand's South Island, Mr Major finally found himself well and truly isolated on the nuclear issue.

On the face of it, the absence of any mention of France was a striking climbdown for regional states. But a British official said dismissively: "It's clearly not Ruritania they're talking about, is it? Views were put forward that the Prime Minister found to have little connection with the real world. There was a fair bit of humbug flying around."

Jim Bolger, the New Zealand prime minister and summit chairman, had wanted to avoid a public row and get the nuclear issue out of the way so that the Commonwealth could deal with Nigeria and broader questions of democracy.

"I believed it was important that we made early progress on this key issue," he said, denying he had "wimped out" by agreeing to disagree with Britain.

Anti-nuclear protests, including a Greenpeace *tableau vivant* of Mr Major in bed with French president Jacques Chirac, have accompanied the conference and focused on Britain's preference for its ties with a key European ally and neighbour over Commonwealth solidarity.

But the Prime Minister had insisted all along he would not condemn France: as a fellow nuclear power, he insisted, it would be hypocritical.

Mr Major has stated repeatedly that France has valid reasons for its tests at Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls, claiming that the blasts are necessary to assure the safety and reliability of the French nuclear arsenal.

France's ambassador in New Zealand, Jacques Le Blanc, said of Mr Major: "I think he is thinking the way we think on the French side."

The Prime Minister also won recognition from Commonwealth leaders for his dexterity over Britain's decision, with France and the United States, to join the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone under the Treaty of Rarotonga.

As thoughts turn to a new government, a former arch-enemy sets foot in Israel proper

Guest of honour . . . Mrs Rabin welcomes Yasser Arafat in her Tel Aviv flat, in a meeting organised by Yossi Ginnossar, centre, a former Shin Bet official

Arafat takes his hat off to Mrs Rabin

Derek Brown *in Jerusalem reports on a furtive meeting which brought the PLO leader to Tel Aviv to pay his respects*

THERE were hundreds of well-wishers outside Leah Rabin's Tel Aviv flat. Not one of them recognised the stocky figure, in black coat and cap, who hurried through a side entrance to console the Middle East's most high-profile widow.

Yasser Arafat had come to call. The man who has been demonised as the arch enemy of Israel for three decades was at last paying his respects to a slain Israeli leader.

The visit on Thursday night was not exactly private, but it was, of necessity, furtive. The chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation set foot in Israel proper for the first time, after a brief helicopter flight from his headquarters in the Gaza Strip.

He landed at Dov airport, outside Tel Aviv, and was whisked by car to the Rabin flat in the north of the city. With him were two of his top lieutenants in the self-rule Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas (*nom de guerre* Abu Mazen) and Ahmad Qurei (Abu Ala).

Three years ago the trio would most likely have been shot on sight had they been daft enough to turn up in Tel Aviv. But on Thursday night their trip was arranged by a former senior officer of the Shin Bet secret police, Yossi Ginnossar. They came in peace and were greeted as friends.

Even so, in Israel, especially now, security is everything. Before the PLO were let into the flat, Mrs Rabin's other visitors were asked to leave. She greeted her guests with only her immediate family, their close friend Eitan Haber, and army chief of staff Amnon Shahak.

"My husband regarded you as his partner in peace," Mrs Rabin told Mr Arafat, according to Israel Radio.

Mr Arafat, asked later what he had said to Mrs Rabin, replied: "That we lost a great man who made the peace of the brave with us. He was our partner and we thank you for continuing his road and his march."

According to the Israeli news agency Itim the mood was very emotional. There was one extraordinary hint of intimacy. The picture in yesterday's Ma'ariv daily showed Mr Arafat sitting opposite Mrs Rabin, without his red-and-white chequered keffiah.

The headdress, Mr Arafat's most famous trademark, is his defence of his advanced baldness of which he is said to be extremely sensitive. To have bared his head in respect for his hostess was a touchingly self-deprecating gesture.

Mr Arafat had been on the sidelines of grief all week. The Israelis asked him not to attend Monday's funeral of his murdered fellow Nobel peace laureate. They feared the security and political repercussions of having a man who had been reviled for so long, suddenly turning up at the heart of the country's affairs.

Mr Arafat had to speak his tributes in isolation in Gaza. He was pictured in his office, glumly watching the live television coverage. Many Israelis thought he should have been at the graveside, but said he had behaved with more dignity than many of their own rightwing politicians, who were shrilly absolving themselves of responsibility for the hatred which killed Yitzhak Rabin.

> 'He was our partner and we thank you for continuing his road and his march'

Thursday night's furtive visit was not altogether dignified, but it probably enhanced Mr Arafat's reputation as a man prepared to do the decent thing.

It has also thrust Mrs Rabin further towards the centre stage of Israeli public life. She has already captured the public imagination, for sharing her grief and speaking her mind. On Monday, the country watched her weeping in the arms of her family in Mount Herzl national cemetery. Later it was transfixed by her quiet but forceful condemnation of the right-wingers who had hurled abuse at her husband.

She candidly confirmed that she had snubbed Binyamin Netanyahu, the opposition leader, at the funeral and blamed him for encouraging the right's abusive campaign against the peace accords.

It is widely believed in Israel that Mrs Rabin is keen to take up her late husband's political standard and stand for his Labour Party in next year's parliamentary elections. The idea is said not to commend itself to Shimon Peres, the acting prime minister.

In the current climate of grief and remorse, her apparent determination to enter public affairs could be hard to refuse.

Tomorrow, the Rabin family will return to Mount Herzl for a solemn ceremony marking the end of the traditional seven-day period of mourning. In the evening Mrs Rabin will be the key speaker at a peace rally in Tel Aviv where, last Saturday evening, her husband was gunned down.

Martin Woollacott, Outlook page 14

Peace ally for Peres

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

A LEADING Israeli peace strategist, Yossi Beilin, is being hotly tipped to become foreign minister when a new government is formed early next week.

Informed sources said yesterday that Mr Beilin, currently economics minister, is the preferred choice of Shimon Peres, the acting prime minister, who will be confirmed in office after the official end of mourning for Yitzhak Rabin tomorrow.

Rabin was shot dead by a Jewish law student as he left a peace rally in Tel Aviv last Saturday night. Police arrested a sixth suspect in the case yesterday.

Michael Epstain, aged 23, was remanded in custody for five days while police prepared charges. He is said to be a friend of Yigal Amir, the self-confessed assassin.

The promotion of Mr Beilin will, if confirmed, be a clear signal that Mr Peres is determined to pursue and even accelerate Rabin's peace policies.

Mr Beilin, aged 47, is a close political confidant of Mr Peres. He has a formidable intellectual reputation as an academic, an official and a politician.

Mr Peres made him cabinet secretary in the national unity government in 1984 and he has been at the heart of peace negotiations with the Palestinians and with Jordan in the current government. He is a strong advocate of Mr Peres's vision of comprehensive peace in the Middle East and something of a demon-figure for the Israeli right.

It is also being widely predicted that Mr Peres will appoint Ehud Barak, the interior minister and until recently chief of staff of the army, to the defence ministry, to reassure the public there will be no compromise on security.

Opinion polls published yesterday indicate that Mr Peres has little to fear from the opposition. According to the popular daily Yediot Ahronoth, 54 per cent of Israelis would vote for Mr Peres as prime minister, while only 23 per cent would vote for Binyamin Netanyahu, the opposition leader.

● New York added to its reputation as a seedbed of Middle Eastern terrorism yesterday with the launch of a telephone hotline aimed at raising money for Yigal Amir, *writes Jonathan Freedland in Washington.*

The line, set up by Jewish extremists in Brooklyn, asks callers to perform a "great *mitzvah* of redeeming this great Jewish hero, Yigal Amir". *Mitzvah* is the Hebrew word for commandment or good deed.

Callers are asked to send cash to his family and to a legal defence fund. Rabin is denounced on the tape as a "radical racist" who hated Orthodox Jews.

News in brief

Iran minister unwelcome

Germany's lower house of parliament demanded yesterday that the government bar Iran's foreign minister because Tehran welcomed the assassination of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Ali Akbar Velayati has accepted an invitation from the foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, to attend an Islamic conference next week. The resolution called for the invitation to be rescinded. — AP.

Marcia cashes in

The prosecutor, Marcia Clark, has signed a $4.2 million book deal to tell her side of the O. J. Simpson trial. The deal was signed with Penguin USA after a three-day, eight-way bidding war for the yet-to-be-written book. — AP.

Turkey protests

Turkey said yesterday that the European Parliament's decision to give its 1995 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought to a jailed Kurdish MP did no credit to the award. Leyla Zana, awarded the prize on Thursday, is serving a 15-year term for involvement with the Kurdistan Workers Party. — Reuter.

Fatal honour

Several French first world war veterans died of joy after hearing they were to receive the Legion of Honour to mark the 77th anniversary of the war's end, the veterans affairs minister said yesterday. He said he knew of at least two who died filling in the form to receive it. — Reuter.

Baby trade

Egyptian police have arrested a woman who tried to sell her seven-day-old baby girl in a market for £100 because she said she needed the money for her family, local newspapers said yesterday. — Reuter.

We are changing all but the essentials.

We are changing everything! The layout, the typeface, the structure and sections of the paper will all change. Only the essentials remain unchanged: clear information, consistent views and free editorial style. Discover the new Journal de Genève.

JOURNAL DE GENEVE
et Gazette de Lausanne
Nothing replaces the written word.

CALIFORNIANS COME TO THEIR SENSES

Until then, there's Glenfiddich to enjoy.

US veto restarts hunt for new secretary-general

Bruised Lubbers leaves Nato race

Julie Wolf in Brussels

THE former Dutch prime minister, Ruud Lubbers, abandoned the race for the job of Nato secretary-general yesterday, after the United States refused to support him, setting off a scramble to find another candidate.

The Dutch foreign minister, Hans Van Mierlo, announced that his government was withdrawing the candidacy of Mr Lubbers, making little attempt to conceal bruised feelings in The Hague.

"The United States has let it been known that it will not support Lubbers' candidacy," Mr Van Mierlo said. "The Netherlands has put forward its best. If that's not good enough, then it's over."

The public trans-Atlantic bickering about Mr Lubbers' candidacy could make it hard to find a compromise figure, particularly given the pressure from Congress on the Clinton administration to defend US interests. Washington apparently felt that Europe was trying to force Mr Lubbers on the US. American officials hit back with hints that Mr Lubbers hadn't performed well at an "interview" with the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher.

The decision left Denmark's former foreign minister, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, as the only declared candidate for the post that became vacant when Belgian Willy Claes resigned three weeks ago amid a domestic bribery scandal.

Nato diplomats, however, played down Mr Ellemann-Jensen's chances because of hostility from Paris and only lukewarm support elsewhere. Mr Ellemann-Jensen will lobby the French government on Monday, when he is due to meet the foreign minister, Hervé de Charette.

In the past France has objected to Mr Ellemann-Jensen on the grounds that he does not speak French well enough. A foreign ministry spokesman did not comment on Paris's position, but said it still regarded the defence of French as one of Nato's two official languages as a key issue.

British, German and US officials indicated that it was now an open race. Nato ambassadors met briefly yesterday to discuss the issue, but diplomats there was no progress towards a consensus. The ambassadors are due to meet again on Tuesday.

There was no sign of a British candidate. Officials said that, with the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, in the Middle East and John Major in New Zealand, the Government had yet to discuss the matter. Its problem will be finding a candidate whose appointment to Nato would not prompt a by-election.

Douglas Hurd remains out of the picture, British officials said. One said the former Foreign Secretary's candidacy was "a dead duck". Sir Leon Brittan, named as a possible candidate in the past, is not expected to put his name forward because of French opposition and a lack of enthusiasm in Washington.

The German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, said that he would meet with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the defence minister, Volker Rühe, to rethink Bonn's position.

Germany backed Mr Lubbers, but only after he obtained strong support from France and Britain. Relations between Dr Kohl and Mr Lubbers soured when the Dutchman failed to give early support for German unification, leading Dr Kohl to block his bid for the presidency of the European Commission last year.

Other names mentioned in connection with the Nato post in recent weeks have included Norway's prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Spanish foreign minister, Javier Solana, and Italy's former foreign minister Giuliano Amato.

Spanish king 'blackmailed'

Adela Gooch in Madrid

SPAIN has been thrown into turmoil by reports of an alleged plot by two businessmen to blackmail King Juan Carlos.

The allegations were made in court submissions in London in a fraud case brought by the Kuwait Investment Office (KIO) against its former representative in Spain, a Catalan financier, Javier de la Rosa.

The newspaper Diario 16 carried an extensive account yesterday of attempts by Mr de la Rosa and a former banker, Mario Conde, to force the king to intervene on their behalf with the courts.

The article coincided with a claim by Mr de la Rosa, who represented the Kuwaitis until 1992, that he channelled money from the government to a close friend of the king.

Mr de la Rosa, who is fighting law suits in London and Madrid over the KIO's £3 billion Spanish investment, made the allegation in a document submitted to the Commercial Court in London as part of his defence, which was reprinted yesterday in Spanish newspapers.

It says he tranferred £63 million from the Kuwaitis into a bank account controlled by Manuel Prado Colón, one of the King's oldest friends who handled his business affairs until 1992.

"Mr Prado asked for this payment for the political lobby that obtained from top level Spanish institutions the support of Spain for Kuwait during the war for the liberation of that country," the document says.

Mr de la Rosa claims to have a video of the king thanking him for the Kuwaiti money in Claridges hotel.

Mr Prado denied receiving money from Mr de la Rosa yesterday, but admitted he had been approached to mediate in court actions pending against the financier and Mr Conde.

Mr Conde is believed to have been behind the leaking of secret service tapes last June, featuring bugged conversations between prominent people allegedly including the king. Diario 16 said the two men had agreed to pool their damaging material to avoid going to prison.

WHILE the Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic signed an agreement in Dayton, Ohio, yesterday to shore up the Muslim-Croat alliance, a Spanish UN soldier (above) crossed a makeshift bridge in Mostar on the site of the old bridge destroyed in fighting between Muslim and Croats in 1993. The new accord calls for Mostar to be reintegrated.

The signing, the first product of 10 days of US-led peace talks, is a step towards a comprehensive settlement.

The US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said the accord finally gave the Muslim-Croat federation "the power to govern effectively" by creating common political and economic institutions".

PHOTOGRAPH: JOZO PAVKOVIC

Czech woman priest emerges from shadows

Ian Traynor in Bonn on a secret clergy facing the Vatican's wrath

IN THE provincial capital of Brno in the Czech republic, a 65-year-old female teacher of religion has come forward to announce she has been a Roman Catholic priest for more than 20 years, operating clandestinely under communist repression until 1989.

Ludmila Javorova, a fierce proponent of female ordination, is the first woman to admit she was ordained a priest in the early 1970s as part of a controversial underground Catholic organisation aimed at outwitting and surviving the communist regime.

Students of east European Catholicism have long believed that the Czech and Slovak secret churches included women priests as well as married male priests and bishops.

Well-placed sources also believe Miss Javorova may not be telling the whole truth: that, in fact, she was consecrated as a bishop.

The controversy, which has provoked intervention from the Vatican, erupted after the collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia in 1989 as the clandestine clergy emerged from the catacombs expecting rehabilitation by church authorities only to find they were unwelcome and unrecognised.

Miss Javorova told Vienna's Catholic magazine Kirche Intern she was one of several women priests working for Bishop Felix Davidek, the key leader of the underground movement established after the Red Army's tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia in 1968 to crush the Prague Spring.

Bishop Davidek, who died in 1988, was an advocate of women's ordination and a ferocious anti-communist. After the Russian invasion, he organised the secret ordination and consecration of priests and bishops for fear that the clergy and the church would be eliminated by the communists.

Of some 300 secret clergy, about 50 were believed to be married male priests, two married male bishops, and several women priests.

The Czech Bishops' Conference has denounced the underground practitioners and demanded their subordination, describing the movement as a "state within a state, a church within a church".

Father Miloslav Fiala, spokesman for the Czech church hierarchy, said yesterday: "The Czech Bishops' Conference knows nothing of the ordination of Miss Javorova, nor of any other women."

"It's no secret that during the persecution women were made deacons, priests, and bishops," said a well-placed lay Catholic in Vienna.

Miss Javorova has declined to reveal who ordained her, but it is understood Bishop Davidek, whom she served as vicar-general, gave her her holy orders.

According to Frantisek Miklosko, a prominent Slovak Catholic politician and former Slovak parliament speaker, the secret ordination of women was begun by a Bishop Nikolaus Krett in Slovakia.

Miss Javorova may not be telling the truth: that she was consecrated as a bishop

Miss Javorova also said she knew of several women priests in Slovakia.

The row between the official and clandestine churches prompted intervention in 1992 by neighbouring Bavaria's Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's Congregation of the Faith, the supreme arbiter in matters of dogma and heresy.

A pastoral letter circulated that year on Vatican orders to all churches in the Czech republic demanded "an end to this extraordinary state of affairs ... It is no longer possible to have twin priesthoods, twin Masses, twin administering of the sacraments, and twin spreaders of the gospels".

Miss Javorova told the Austrian magazine she had written to Pope John Paul II to explain her ordination but had received no reply. She remains a firm supporter of a female priesthood, but sceptical that there will be a breakthrough soon: "You cannot change a 2,000-year tradition of male priests overnight."

NEW SCOTTISH WIDOWS WITH PROFITS BOND

TRIED, TRUSTED AND COMPLETELY NEW

On the one hand, our With Profits Bond is a whole new opportunity for lump sum investors looking for solid growth.

On the other, there's already an impressive track record behind it. Because all investments in the Bond will go into our With Profits Fund - a proven top ten performer over many years - where they will benefit from Scottish Widows' financial strength and reputation for paying competitive bonus rates.

SPECIAL ½% BONUS

As a further reward for investors who move fast, there's a special introductory ½% bonus allocation on all applications received on or before 13th December 1995. (If there is excessive demand, we may be forced to withdraw the Bond without notice.)

To find out more, phone this number now.

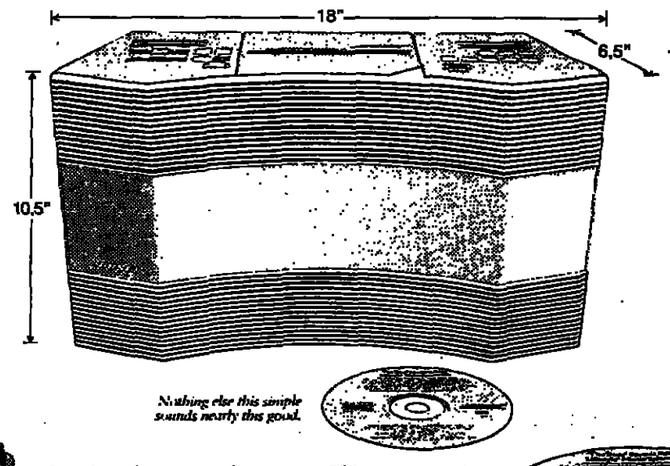
Advice from a name you can trust. Directly by telephone 24 hours a day.

0345 6789 10

SCOTTISH WIDOWS

THE SOUND WILL MOVE YOU WHEREVER YOU TAKE IT.

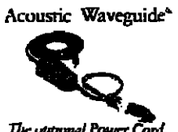
The Bose® Acoustic Wave® music system, the only thing that's limited is its availability.



Nothing else this simple sounds nearly this good.

The optional Powerease provides music on the go.

Bose introduces an easier, more convenient way to enjoy superb sound – the Acoustic Wave® music system. The result of over 12 years of intensive research, this system is small (10.5"h x 18"w x 6.5"d) and light (less than 18 lbs.), so you can take it anywhere. More important, it is a complete sound system. With three speakers, two equalizers, three amplifiers, an AM/FM stereo tuner and a CD player. All built-in for ultimate convenience. What you hear is rich, natural sound. The heart of this lifelike sound is the Acoustic Waveguide® speaker technology, which has won Dr. Bose America's prestigious "Inventor of the Year" award.



The optional Power Cord. For use in your car, boat, caravan or other 12 to 15-volt DC source.

As advanced as it is, this system is exceptionally simple to operate. There are no cables to connect. No dials to adjust. Just plug it in and start enjoying pure stereo sound.

Availability strictly limited.

Not only is there a limited supply of the Acoustic Wave® music system, you also will not find it in any shop.

This system is only available direct from Bose. For a free information pack, simply call the free number or send/fax the coupon below. Or to try the system in your home for 14 days, satisfaction guaranteed, call:

0800 614 293.

When calling, please quote reference number 5035.

Yes, Bose, it sounds good to me.

Please send me more information about the Bose Acoustic Wave® music system and the 14-day, satisfaction-guaranteed home audition.

Name _____ Mr/Mrs/Ms.

Tel. _____ day _____ eve

Address _____

Postal code _____ 5035

Please return in an envelope to:
Bose, Freepost TK 1020, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 5UN.
No stamp necessary.
Or fax to: 0181 894 7664.

BOSE Better sound through research.

Court deals new blow to Howard

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

THE Home Secretary, Michael Howard, was dealt the latest of a series of blows by the judiciary yesterday, when a High Court judge ruled he had no absolute right to decide the minimum time convicted murderers should serve.

Mr Justice Turner said the Home Secretary had "failed to measure up to the required standard of fairness" when he increased from 15 to 20 years the "tariff" fixed by judges on a double killer.

The case is the first successful challenge to the setting of a tariff for a mandatory life prisoner, though several cases await a hearing. Legal experts said that the ruling, which may go to appeal, would have far-reaching implications for the many lifers whose tariffs have been increased by home secretaries.

Chief among them could be Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, the boy killers of the Liverpool toddler James Bulger. Their tariff was set at eight years by the trial judge, increased to 10 by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, and fixed at 15 by Mr Howard.

The case is the third embarrassing defeat for Mr Howard at the hands of the judiciary in as many months. Last week Mr Justice Sedley ruled that he had acted unfairly in barring the Unification Church leader Sun Myung Moon from entering Britain.

Last September Mr Justice Dyson found Mr Howard had operated a "manifestly unjust policy" in delaying applications for parole by five IRA prisoners.

Yesterday's case concerned John Pierson, who murdered his sleeping mother and father at a remote farmhouse near Oswestry, Shropshire, in 1984. He received a double life sentence for the killing, described by the trial judge, Mr Justice Michael Davies, as "horrifying and apparently motiveless".

The judge and the then Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, recommended a tariff of 15 years for "retribution and deterrence". But Pierson, was told in 1993 that the Home Secretary had increased his minimum sentence to 20 years.

The original decision had been taken by Douglas Hurd, but prisoners only won the right to be told their tariffs in 1993 after another lifer successfully took the Home Secretary to the High Court.

Mr Howard said the decision reflected the fact that it was a premeditated double killing. Pierson's lawyers replied that it was a single incident, that the judge and Lord Lane had been aware of the circumstances, and there was no evidence that it was premeditated. The usual tariff for a domestic murder was 10-12 years. But Mr Howard insisted on the 20-year tariff.

The judge said the Home Secretary had erred in law in believing he had an absolute discretion to increase a lifer's sentence if he thought fit. In the case of Pierson, who was 20 at the time of the murders, there was no new aggravating factor giving rise to exceptional circumstances.

The judge gave leave to appeal against the ruling.

During the hearing, Edward Fitzgerald, Pierson's QC, told the court the tariff had been set at a particularly bad moment when the Home Office was handing out longer terms to life prisoners than those recommended by the trial judge in 60 per cent of cases.

Rightwing critics of the High Court judges have painted them as a liberal establishment determined to curb a "tough on crime" home secretary. But yesterday's ruling came from a judge described by one QC as reactionary. Another said: "It's interesting that a judge of a quite clearly conservative tendency has said this to Howard."

Many senior judges believe it wrong that a politician should have any say in how long a prisoner should serve.

Jon Venables's parents are pursuing his case before the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg. In a different case also involving two juveniles, the commission held last December that Mr Howard had no right to fix the tariff. That case is awaiting a hearing by the Human Rights court.

Dorrell attacks 'distortions' in BBC's Casualty

Michael White
Political Editor

THE Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, and the Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, made a pre-emptive strike last night on tonight's edition of BBC 1's hospital drama Casualty, alleging that it maligns the Government's GP fundholding system.

With the BBC gearing up for intense pressure from all political parties as the general election draws closer, the ministers challenged the corporation's director-general, John Birt, to justify the supposedly inaccurate portrayal of a system which Labour regards as the basis for a two-tier NHS — one that favours doctors who control their own budgets.

The episode which has roused Tory ire concerns a fundholder's patient who dies of kidney failure in the fictional Holby casualty department after being taken on a 50 mile journey, past two other hospitals, because the GP has a contract with Holby.

"It's not about lives then, it's about business ... his widow is threatening to sue and I don't blame her," a hospital registrar complains in tonight's episode, which could attract up to 15 million viewers.

The BBC insists that in the programme the GP misdiagnoses the illness and initially sends the patient to Holby as a non-emergency case.

Last night Mr Birt released letters of reply sent to the ministers earlier this week to stress his support for the series producer, Corinne Hollingworth. "I am assured that there was never any intention to imply that the patient's death was caused by the fundholding status of his GP," he argued.

Though Mr Birt said the storyline had been suggested by a medical adviser to the programme — "a practising consultant" — and Casualty would never portray something "unlikely to happen in real life", Mr Dorrell and Dr Mawhinney say it could never happen like this.

Mr Dorrell wrote: "In an emergency, the status of the patient's GP is irrelevant. Emergency cases are treated in all NHS hospitals without reference either to a fundholding GP or the home health authority ... emergency care is available purely on the basis of clinical need."

He conceded that the patient's health authority or fundholding GP might subsequently be charged for treatment.

But he added: "Any assertion contained within the programme that the GP fundholding scheme operates differently from the way I have described, particularly if that assertion were made by a character portraying a doctor, would be hard to reconcile with the [BBC] guidelines."

Dr Mawhinney, a former health minister and hospital lecturer, quoted the BBC's guidelines as saying that when contemporary controversy is realistically portrayed "it has an obligation to be accurate". He called on Mr Birt for "an urgent reply" — though both ministers wrote privately after press reports last weekend.

The Government wants all GPs to become fundholders. Labour would abolish the status but leave GPs with greater "commissioning" clout against hospitals.

To advertise in
The Guardian
please call 0171 239 9735

Princess Salimah leaves the court of justice in Geneva after the judgment with a lawyer friend, Philippe Lizop. Below, the £5 million Begum Blue PHOTOGRAPH: DONALD STAMPFLI

Diamonds are forever – but a judge rules that the jewels of the Aga Khan's wife can be auctioned off

Sally Weale

THE Aga Khan, one of the world's richest men and spiritual leader of the international community of Ismaili Muslims, yesterday lost his battle to prevent his former wife selling a collection of jewels given to her as part of their divorce settlement.

The sale by Christie's, which is expected to raise £10 million for Princess Salimah Aga Khan — perhaps even more given the publicity surrounding the dispute between the couple — will take place on Monday in the plush environs of the Hôtel Richemond overlooking Lake Geneva in Switzerland.

The go-ahead was given in a ruling by Judge Pierre-Yves Demeule in the Geneva appeals court yesterday at the end of a legal battle lasting nearly three weeks. In a concession he ordered that 23 minor lots, whose value amounted to less than 2 per cent of the total, should be withdrawn and sold to the Aga Khan.

Princess Salimah, the Aga Khan's British-born ex-wife, told reporters after the hearing: "It's a big relief."

Christie's yesterday opened an exhibition of the 261 lots in Geneva before the court decision had been announced. Last night the collection was already drawing crowds.

François Curiel, who heads Christie's Switzerland and will conduct the evening session of Monday's sale, said last night: "I'm thrilled. Buyers will be free to purchase the jewels and it's the end of a sad story.

"It has given the sale a lot of publicity — if anything, it can only be beneficial. It drew the attention of the world at large. But it was a bit stressful for us in the last few hours."

Judge Demeule arrived at his decision after a last-minute appeal hearing on Thursday in which the Aga Khan's lawyers requested that the sale should be halted on the grounds that the collection included family and religious jewels which should remain within the family.

Pierre Lalive, representing the Aga Khan, said that the couple's divorce settlement last March, reached after 25 years of marriage and reported to be in the region of £20 million, had been amicable and very generous. The princess, formerly Sally Croker-Poole, had at the time seemed "thoroughly satisfied".

The agreement stipulated that she might only sell "some items" from the collection of jewels in extreme circumstances — otherwise they should be handed down to the couple's three children.

The settlement also determined that the prince had the first refusal if the gems were put up for sale. It was only when he received the Christie's catalogue that he realised most were family jewels, items of religious significance, or gems given to the princess as wife of the leader of the Ismaili community.

Dominique Warluzel, acting for the princess, told the court the prince had already used his right of first refusal to buy the gems in a letter dated October 19 in which his lawyer, Mr Lalive, offered £126,000 for 23 lots on behalf of the prince. The offer was refused.

"She owns the jewels. That has been recognised by the Aga Khan," Mr Warluzel told the court. "This war is being waged to harm his ex-wife. Such behaviour is not dignified of a prince."

The Aga Khan, who last night "noted with regret" the decision, had obtained an injunction last month preventing the sale. In a hearing on Monday before a lower civil court, it was lifted. Thursday's appeal was the final avenue open to him.

Last night Hubert Rosenthal, an international jewellery expert, welcomed the court's decision. He said the 23 items withdrawn from the auction were all minor and did not affect the importance of the sale. "If a husband gives his wife some jewels, they are her belongings and she does what she wants with them," he said.

Items to suit all tastes from £5 million to £1,000

Lot 261: The Begum Blue — it's big, blue and will set you back £5 million. The star of the sale, a rare 13.78 carat diamond in a heart-shaped design necklace chosen by the princess

Lot 259: Cartier emerald and diamond necklace, brooch, ring and earrings, dripping with Colombian emeralds the size of boiled sweets. Estimate £800,000.

Lot 256: Comparatively modest Boucheron single-stone ring, with deep blue 4.37 carat diamond mounted in platinum and 18K gold. Far from modest estimate, at £1 million.

Lot 249: Van Cleef & Arpels necklace, earrings and brooch, with enough diamonds, emeralds and sapphires to stock an entire chain of Ratners — £530,000.

Lot 10: Bargain basement pair of mother-of-pearl and 18K gold earclips by Van Cleef & Arples, expected to make a mere £1,000.

Irish police intercept huge bomb

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

A 1,300lb van bomb intercepted close to the border within the Irish Republic sparked a huge security operation yesterday as police arrested three men and searched for others who they believe were planning an attack in Northern Ireland.

Garda officers said that the bomb could have caused massive damage and injury. Its discovery has shaken the Northern Ireland peace process.

Two men — one of them said by security sources to be a senior figure in an organisation called the Irish National Republican Army — were arrested in the operation, and a third was apprehended later. A search was continuing for two others seen running off.

Police said 700lbs of explosives was found in a nearby shed. Also in the van were detonators and cortex fuse.

They believe the van bomb, containing a homemade explosive mixture, was going to be exploded across the border. The white Hiace van, was stolen in Dublin on Tuesday.

A Garda spokesman in Monaghan said: "It was capable of causing massive damage, and appears to have been designed as a deliberate bid to wreck the peace process." Detective Superintendent Mick Finnegan from Dundalk Garda station said the bomb was intercepted after "a long and ongoing intelligence operation".

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, said the discovery underscored the need for continuing vigilance and "vindicates our approach of a positive, flexible yet measured security response to the ceasefires".

All those who claimed to be fully committed to the peace process and democratic methods should "condemn this action in forthright and unambiguous terms". He dismissed claims from the Democratic Unionist Party leader, the Rev Ian Paisley, that the Government had been premature in relaxing security.

Police in the republic claim that the Irish National Republican Army is the military wing of Republican Sinn Fein, which broke away from the main Sinn Fein in 1986 when that party opted to end its policy of abstention in the Irish parliament. The group is said by police sources to comprise a small core of some 50 hardline former IRA personnel. They are kept under constant surveillance.

Republican Sinn Fein — headed by veteran former Sinn Fein president Ruairi O Bradaigh — denies the existence of a military arm. Today it is holding its annual conference in Dublin.

Almost exactly 12 months ago, on the eve of RSF's 1994 conference, there was a series of police raids in the republic. Gardai found guns and ammunition near Dundalk, Co Louth. Detectives said they believed they belonged to the INRA. A number of arrests were made but no charges were brought. But Mr O'Bradaigh says the INRA is a figment of the imagination of Garda Special Branch.

Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, which is linked to the loyalist Ulster Defence Association, said: "This is the most serious development since the ceasefires and throws a shadow over the peace process."

He added: "The argument for any form of physical decommissioning becomes a nonsense while such threats remain against the loyalist people." If the IRA chose to remain silent, it would be sending a very serious message to loyalists.

Sinn Fein's chief negotiator in the talks with the Government, Martin McGuinness, sought to play down the incident. "I think we should not overreact to the find. There have been other finds and incidents in the course of the last 15 months," he told a news conference in London. "I think all of this is manageable. What we need to do is keep cool heads."

RSF rejects the Downing Street Declaration and last month it launched a recruitment drive in Belfast.

Two weeks ago a Dublin newspaper reported that a number of Provisional IRA members in south-west Ireland — where its main arms bunkers are hidden — had defected to RSF because of dissatisfaction with the IRA ceasefire.

Vatican anger over bishop's HIV advice to school teachers

Madeleine Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

A ROMAN Catholic Archbishop has been criticised by the Vatican for endorsing an educational pack on the prevention of HIV which was counter to church teaching.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome told Archbishop Keith O'Brien, of St Andrews and Edinburgh, to remove his Imprimatur, his official sign of endorsement, from HIV Prevention — A Christian Response and to withdraw the pack from Catholic schools.

Four hundred copies of the pack, written by two Catholics, were produced three years ago to help teachers discuss the issue with senior pupils. The Congregation criticised the pack for advocating the use of condoms for people who are HIV positive. It also objected to the pack's implicit acknowlidgement of homosexuals living together, as well as the inclusion of a list of agencies dealing with Aids and HIV because they did not operate according to church guidelines. The Catholic Church teaches that people who are HIV positive or have Aids must abstain from sex and that contraception is evil, said the Reverend Tom Connolly, director of the Scottish Catholic Media Office.

Archbishop O'Brien has accepted the decision and was unavailable for comment yesterday.

Copy, copy, at Sharp we not only judge a copier on how fast it copies, but also on how long it keeps copying. That's why we build our machines to last. If you'd like more information just call 0800 262 958 and quote reference number CGV L3.

SHARP
INTELLIGENT THINKING

Demonstrators held a silent vigil outside the Nigerian high commission in London last night after hearing of the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa PHOTOGRAPHS: TOM JENKINS

A people's struggle to save their land

Suppression of protest at the rape of the Niger delta has been sordid and violent

Jonathan Steele

THE protest movement which brought Ken Saro-Wiwa into conflict, first with Shell, and then with the Nigerian government, goes back to 1990. It was then that the first stirrings of anger against foreign oil companies began to ripple through the communities of the Niger river delta.

The lush region of mangrove swamps, rain-forests and farmland is home to 6 million people. The communities have been poor for years, but they decided to take action against the rape of their land, which left their soil and water polluted and gave them nothing except a legacy of rusting pipelines, thousands of unsightly wells and refineries, and no material benefits from the oil profits at all.

In 1990 the Etche people demonstrated against Shell. It was a peaceful affair, but Shell's response was to call for police protection in case of further action. The Mobile Police Force (MPF), with a reputation for brutality, was sent in and proceeded to massacre 80 people and destroy 495 homes.

Although an inquiry blamed the police, the communities held Shell accountable since it was responsible for the initial grievance and for choosing police methods rather than negotiating with the local people.

From then on the protest movement spread rapidly, but met the same stone-walling by Shell and vicious response from the police. In the summer of 1992 the MPF was sent into villages in the Gbaran oilfield, shooting 30 people and beating 150 others.

By now the Ogoni people, for whom Saro-Wiwa became the most prominent spokesman, were involved.

He helped to found Mosop, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, which issued a bill of rights. In addition to compensation for the loss of the Ogonis' oil from Shell, Mosop called for self-determination for Ogoniland, a demand which pitted it firmly against the government.

The worst act of repression hit the Ogoni in January 1993 after a mass rally. This time the police did not just kill, although the number of their victims reached 2,000. They burnt down 27 villages and forced 80,000 people to move altogether.

Shell, meanwhile, tried to distance itself from the conflict, claiming that it was the Nigerian government's responsibility to provide the water, roads and electricity which the people wanted. It was operating legally in Nigeria and could not engage in a conflict over self-determination between the people and their government.

The rigged presidential elections of June 1993 sharpened the issue by creating powerful differences within the communities. More conservative, older people, including some tribal chiefs, favoured supporting the rich businessman and civilian candidate Chief Moshood Abiola. Saro-Wiwa favoured a total boycott.

After this display of defiance, the military regime virtually occupied the area with troops and special police. When elections were being discussed in May last year for representatives to a national constitutional conference, splits in the Ogoni community erupted. Four Ogoni chiefs were murdered during a riot.

The military regime, which had annulled the presidential elections because they produced the wrong result, used the chiefs' deaths as a pretext to charge Saro-Wiwa with murder. Although he was under arrest at the time of the murders, the military claimed he had incited the killers.

He and a group of colleagues were put on trial, and sentenced to death last week. The proceedings were deeply flawed, according to Michael Birnbaum QC, who observed on behalf of the Law Society. The court sat as a Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal, run by two judges and a military officer. They could not be overruled, and there was no right of appeal.

The authority which confirmed the conviction was the Provisional Ruling Council, in effect the government.

Worse than that, the tribunal ignored the fact that two witnesses against Saro-Wiwa swore affidavits that their evidence was false and that they and other witnesses had been bribed. The prosecution did not furnish the accused with a summary of the case against them.

Nevertheless, in the light of widespread international protest, the regime's leader, General Sani Abacha, had the power to commute the death sentences as an act of clemency.

Yesterday he gave his ice-cold response.

Protesters deliver their wordless messages of anger to High Commission

John Mullin

THERE occurred a symbolic moment of shame at the Nigerian High Commission in London last night. On the dot of 6.30, as usual, an official appeared from behind locked doors to lower the fluttering flag above its entrance. Demonstrators opposite wondered whether Nigeria's regime could stoop any lower.

As the embarrassed worker gingerly stepped back inside away from the braying crowd, he had to avoid a solitary bunch of white chrysanthemums. They had cost £3.50 at nearby Embankment Underground station, but the message they sent to the Ogoni people was worth much, much more.

Christine Usher, aged 36, a medical physicist, who has campaigned for imprisoned Ogoni members since May last year, had placed them there.

She had rushed to join the 24-hour Amnesty International demonstration, already under way when the nine dissidents were led in chains from their cells to be hanged, as soon as a friend telephoned her with news of the executions. "There is no message with the flowers. Nobody needs one to know what we feel about the Nigerian regime."

As city workers supped a Friday evening drink in the adjacent Sherlock Holmes pub, up to 80 demonstrators were struggling with the mystery of why the international community failed to do more to save Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight colleagues on death row. They were staggered at the speed at which the death sentences were carried out. No one inside the high commission was prepared to come out and enlighten them, a Metropolitan Police presence nothwithstanding.

Lazarus Tamana, 38, president of the Ogoni Community Association in Britain, heard the news direct from Port Harcourt. They were the first executions there since Nigeria gained independence in 1960. He said: "I received word at 11.30 this morning. Nobody would believe me. People in the press were saying that they couldn't possibly do that, particularly with the Commonwealth Conference under way.

"I am outraged by this callous and evil regime and the killing of these innocent nine Ogoni people. They were framed. It confirms that the Nigerian government was determined right from day one to punish the Ogoni people, and they have certainly done that.

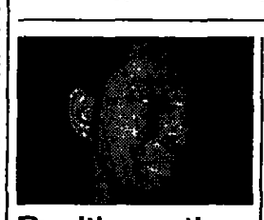
"Nigeria should be expelled immediately from the Commonwealth, and tough sanctions imposed. The UN should suspend Nigeria now.

"Shell's products should be boycotted. They have polluted our land and destroyed our rivers. They have taken so much from us and nothing happens to them."

Although most protesters held candles in a silent vigil, delivery driver Danny Serrieux, aged 30, was loudly giving vent to his fury. "John Major: you let this happen.

"Years ago Nigeria led the world against apartheid. Now it's just like South Africa was, another murderous regime."

As theatregoers began to file in to see Ray Cooney's Funny Money! at the nearby Playhouse, Richard Baynall, aged 28, a public relations consultant, was backing the boycott of Shell. "They would never have got away with it in Britain, so why should they get away with it in Nigeria. And it was no great help that Mandela didn't condemn them more strongly."



Punitive action by international community is unlikely and will at best be limited

Leonard Doyle

THERE is little prospect of stringent sanctions being imposed on Nigeria by the international community, despite the wave of outrage which followed yesterday's executions.

Commonwealth leaders will try to agree an action plan at their traditional weekend retreat in New Zealand, but it is accepted that there is no prospect of Nigeria being expelled because the 52-country organisation operates on the basis of consensus.

An oil embargo is all but ruled out, because the United States, Nigeria's biggest customer, already has sanctions in place against three other main producers: Iran, Iraq and Libya.

Economic sanctions are also unlikely. The regime has $65 billion on deposit with London banks, but this is being held against loans totalling $472 billion. Britain could freeze Nigeria's assets, as it has done to Iraq and Serbia under the United Nations Act, but first there would have to be a UN Security Council resolution.

The best the international community could come up with yesterday was a decision by the private sector lending arm of the World Bank to halt its planned funding for a $3 billion natural gas project in Nigeria.

The Commonwealth heads of government will this weekend consider proposals for visa restrictions on Nigerian officials and the publication of regular reports on human rights abuses as part of the action plan. Another possibility is a sports boycott.

Underriding any moves is a concern not to antagonise the military regime further and set back a return to democracy.

At the UN Security Council yesterday the US and three European Union countries, including Britain, engaged in hand-wringing, which is about the worst the Nigerian regime will have to endure from the UN, diplomatic sources in New York said.

Washington's UN ambassador, Madeleine Albright, said the US was considering requesting council action, but there appeared to be little prospect of support for such a move.

"We particularly deplore this reported action taken despite the pleas of so many governments, including my own," Ms Albright said. "My government is now urgently considering what further steps to take."

In the absence of any overt threat to international peace and security, the Security Council will see the executions as a purely domestic matter. There are therefore no grounds for council sanctions like those in force against Iraq and Libya, diplomatic sources said.

Calls for sanctions would be instantly vetoed by China — a permanent member of the council — because of its extreme sensitivity to interference in domestic affairs.

Britain's UN ambassador, Sir John Weston, read a news agency report on the executions at the council and Italy and France followed with condemnations. This prompted Nigeria's delegate, Isaac Ayewah, to accuse "certain members of the council led by the British delegation" of meddling in the country's internal affairs and "ascribing to themselves the role of the world's policemen".

National streak of pride and stubbornness comes to fore in latest, most repressive junta

David Pallister

SUCCESSIVE military regimes in Nigeria have been at best inept at managing Africa's most populous country and at worst corrupt and brutal. The current junta run by General Sani Abacha has shown itself to be by far the most erratic and repressive.

Gen Abacha's predecessor, General Ibrahim Babangida, at least had a genial smile, an easy manner and a political cunning that earned him the nickname Maradona.

But Gen Abacha, who has been the *éminence grise* behind the previous two coups in the past 12 years, has none of his finesse. Since the annulment of the 1993 presidential elections last year, Gen Abacha has increasingly developed a siege mentality in his fortress headquarters of Aso Rock in the remote capital Abuja, while Lagos, the teeming, unruly commercial capital, has been allowed to disintegrate even further.

That is not to say that Nigerians are cowed by their military masters. Those who are not on the ample gravy train of government contracts and oil lifting licences, are simply weary of the soldiers mouthing promises of economic recovery and a return to civilian rule.

Yet there are brave lawyers, journalists and doctors, human rights activists and some trade union leaders who refuse to be silenced.

Despite regular harassment, detention without trial and occasional torture by an underpaid and undertrained paramilitary police force, in the markets and bars of Lagos there is no sense of the sort of fear that used to pervade neighbouring countries like Togo and forced people to whisper their frustrations.

The only constituency that Gen Abacha cares about is the armed forces and principally the army's armoured brigades, recently supplied with 80 Victor tanks and government loans to replace their Peugeot 505s.

That explains his regular reshuffling of the 25-member Provisional Ruling Council and the posting abroad of potential critics such as Colonel Lawan Gwadabe, sent to head the Gambian army last year, and now sentenced for his part in an alleged coup earlier this year.

In September six new council members were appointed. The more senior members are the chief of the general staff, Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya, the chief of the defence staff, Major-General Abdusalami Abubakar, the three service chiefs, and the inspector general of police. A key confidant to Gen Abacha is Brigadier Ahmed Abdullahi, the commander of the 1st mechanised division, who was sent to London last month in a futile attempt to convince John Major of the general's intentions to stand down in three years' time.

While the winner of the 1993 elections, Chief Moshood Abiola is still in jail, few Nigerians believe Gen Abacha will keep to that timetable. Most think the soldiers will find excuses to stay on — as former Brigadier David Mark claimed in an interview with the Nigerian magazine Newswatch last year.

The opprobrium heaped on the regime does have its effect. But since Nigeria became a force to be reckoned with during the oil-boom 1970s, it has resented foreign criticism. One in five Africans is from the "giant of Africa", which as a colony was never wholly made subservient to British interests. That strain of stubbornness and pride was dramatically displayed with yesterday's executions.

The dilemma of Israel is not whether deals with Syria or the Palestinians are worth the risk, but how to be Israel without the issue of the land.
Martin Woollacott in Jerusalem

Outlook page 14

More fizz less bucks!

There's never been a better time to buy your Champagne at Oddbins and with all this wonderful fizz on offer at the equivalent of 20% off the normal price, you've got the perfect excuse to stock up early for Christmas!

Buy 12, get 3 extra free!

Heidsieck Dry Monopole £12.49

Bonnet £13.99

Bonnet Rosé £14.99

Perrier-Jouët £16.99

Mumm Cordon Rouge £17.49

Pommery £17.99

Billecart-Salmon £18.99

Taittinger £20.99

Louis Roederer £21.99

Billecart-Salmon Rosé £25.99

(all non-vintage 75cl bottles)

Oddbins

Offer applies only to selected Champagnes. Valid until 20th November 1995. 3 free bottles must be the same as the other 12 bottles purchased. No further discounts apply. Subject to availability.

Racing

Mackeson made for Dublin Flyer

Ron Cox

THE sight of Dublin Flyer sailing over the Grand National fences on his way to victory under 12 stone in the John Hughes Memorial Chase is one of the abiding memories of last jumps season.

As much as Aintree, Cheltenham is a course which calls for accurate jumping. Ability to see out the trip is also essential and on both counts Dublin Flyer's credentials cannot be faulted in today's Mackeson Gold Cup.

Built in the mould of the old-fashioned chaser, which is entirely in keeping with the policy of Tim Forster, his trainer, Dublin Flyer already has a fine record round Cheltenham.

Winner of the Tripleprint Gold Cup last December, he narrowly failed to cope with the lightly-weighted Kadi at the Festival before signing off with that outstanding Aintree display, when he was clear at halfway and had one of today's opponents, Buckboard Bounce, well back in fifth.

It was largely Dublin Flyer's bold jumping which got Coulton into difficulties in the Tripleprint Cup.

Taken on for the lead, Coulton was getting the worse of the argument when blundering his chance away at the 12th fence. It seems unlikely Jamie Osborne will ask a similar question of Coulton, who in any case seems a safer jumper nowadays.

But arguably Coulton's best performances have come when he has been able to dominate in small fields. Any jumping error will be severely punished under 12st in this company.

Bradbury Star bids for an unprecedented third Mackeson victory — he beat Second Schedual (now 1lb worse off) by a head last year, with Egypt Mill Prince 15 lengths away third, and had seven lengths to spare over the latter in 1993.

In the last two seasons Bradbury Star has had a warm-up race, but this time he is returning from a lengthy absence on top of an operation to remove chips of bone from a hind leg.

Dublin Flyer (3.00) is the other runner lacking a recent outing, but he has won first time out for the last two seasons — by an aggregate of 50 lengths — and has had the right preparation from Forster, who remains one of the best trainers of steeplechasers in the business.

Another master of his profession, Reg Akehurst, can provide the answer to the Murphy's Handicap Hurdle with **Admiral's Well (2.25)**.

A useful stayer on the Flat this year, Admiral's Well looks leniently treated over hurdles. He had to be ridden along to win a modest event at Ascot last month, but the slow pace was all against him.

David Bridgwater takes over from the stable's 7lb claiming rider and, in a race which they normally go a good gallop, Admiral's Well can outstay Romancer and Chief's Song up the stiff run-in.

Wishing may well initiate a double for Akehurst and Bridgwater in the opening race. Very able on the Flat on his day, Wishing wears blinkers for the first time, no doubt in an attempt to brush up his jumping.

He was prone to running the odd bad race on the level and preference here is for **Hawker Hunter (1.15)**. This former Paul Cole-trained four-year-old is reported to have impressed in home schooling. Charles Egerton, his new trainer, is renowned for getting his horses ready first time.

Given the superb form of the Gordon Richards stable, **One Man (2.10)** can return to winning ways at Ayr, where his clash with Jodami in the Sean Graham 'Motherwell' Chase should provide a useful pointer to the Hennessy Gold Cup later this month.

Fresh challenge for Snip

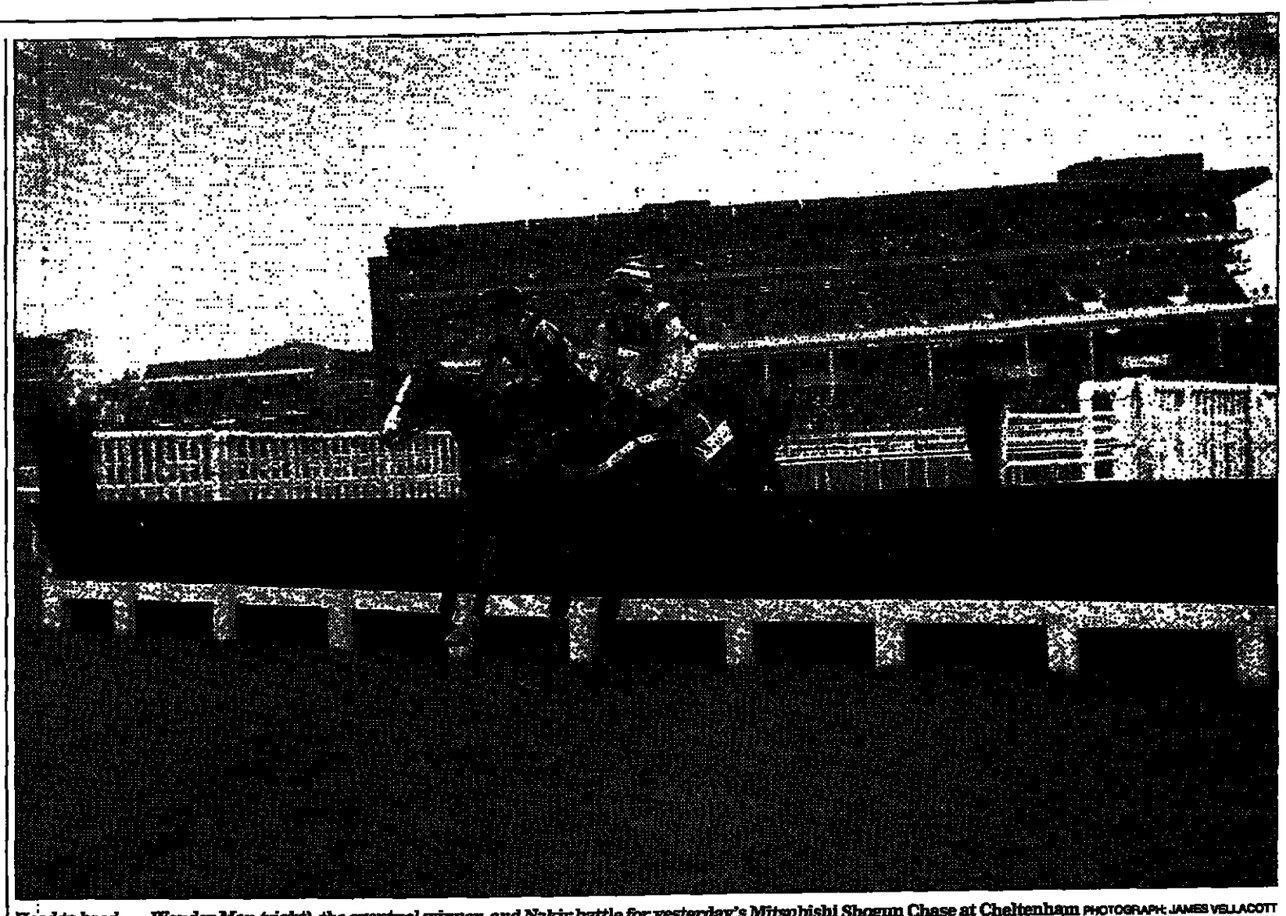
THE £10,000 Sporting Index Chase, tomorrow's feature race at Cheltenham over the new cross country course, has attracted 14 runners, among them Bagout from Belgium and the Irish raider Mr Murrhill.

The new course, which comprises 12 different fences, including ditches, banks, hedges and rails, is based on the popular French tracks at Pau and Craon.

Charlie Mann's Its A Snip attempts to follow up last month's victory in the awesome Velka Pardubicka in the Czech republic, while Rosemary Henderson, who finished fifth to Miinnehoma in the 1994 Grand National aboard Fiddlers Pike, was unable to resist the challenge of the new course.

The pair, who have a combined age of 67, once again have completing the course as their objective, rather than victory.

Also in the line-up is Kim Bailey's 1991 Whitbread Gold Cup winner, Docklands Express, now 13 years old.



Head to head ... Wonder Man (right), the eventual winner, and Nakir battle for yesterday's Mitsubishi Shogun Chase at Cheltenham PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES VELLACOTT

McCoy heads appeal against seven-day ban

TONY McCOY, the season's leading National Hunt jockey, will appeal against the seven day ban he and five other riders collected for taking the wrong course at Taunton on Thursday.

He will lodge his protest against the severity of a suspension that could rule him out of two of the biggest Saturdays of the season — Aintree next week and Newbury's Hennessy card the following week.

McCoy will be joined in his appeal by Mick Fitzgerald and Mark Richards, and probably Guy Lewis, Tom Dascombe and Emily Jones, each handed identical punishments.

"I'm mostly upset at the severity of the ban for what was my first offence," McCoy said yesterday. "I was in behind two or three horses at the second-last and I just couldn't see what was happening."

Wonder Man, once a star for Jenny Pitman and David Nicholson, ended a sequence of 15 defeats to win on his first start for his latest trainer, Nicky Henderson, at Cheltenham yesterday. Without a victory since December 1992, he rediscovered the winning groove in a match for the Mitsubishi Shogun Handicap Chase.

Recovering from a slip at the second-last fence, the 10-year-old regained his poise for an emphatic eight-length beating of Nakir. Wonder Man had joined Henderson during the winter when his owners, Bill and Shirley Robins, decided to take the horse away from Nicholson.

But his new handler admitted he had little to do with today's change of fortune. "I've seen Wonder Man in some great battles in the past and I feared I faced an awesome task. But he's a real star and I've not seen a horse enjoy himself as he has with us for a long time," said Henderson. "I just wish he was five years younger, but he is a good horse and there are still races to be won with him."

Gordon Richards, who won Cheltenham's Steel Plate And Sections Young Chasers Final with Unguided Missile, landed an Ayr double with The Grey Monk and Better Times Ahead, taking his total wins at the Scottish track to a staggering 270.

Cheltenham with form guide

1.15 Hawker Hunter
1.50 Silverfort Lad
2.25 ADMIRAL'S WELL (nap)
3.00 Dublin Flyer
3.35 Flyer's Nap
4.10 Morgans Harbour

Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest NH outing.

Channel 4

1.15 FLOWERS FINE ALES NOVICE HURDLE 2m 110yds £3,912

101 21/42-10 CALL EQUINAME (7) (D) (BF) F Nicholls 5-11-2 ... A P McCoy
102 221-121 SPEEDWELL PRINCE (14) (D) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-2 ... T Jenks
103 05- SHAVINAGAR (386) B Ellison 4-10-12 ... M A Fitzgerald
104 231IF4 BLAIR CASTLE (14) (D) G Balding 4-10-12 ... B Clifford
105 DESERT POWER D Burchell 6-10-12 ... D J Burchell
106 HAWKER HUNTER C Egerton 4-10-12 ... J Osborne
107 1 MANDYS MANTINO (28) J Gifford 5-10-12 ... P Hide
108 143- PERSIAN SAINT (14) D Elsworth 4-10-12 ... Mr P Henley
109 1/2444-1 THE BOSTAIL FOX (91) P Hobbs 6-10-12 ... G McCourt
110 0-1 WILDE MUSIC (17) C Brooks 5-10-12 ... G Bradley
111 12 WISHING (22) (CD) R Akehurst 4-10-12 ... D Bridgwater ★
112 00301-1 UP THE JUNCTION (21) (D) Mrs P Dutfield 5-10-11 ... A McCabe

TOP FORM TIPS: Wishing 10, Call Equiname 8, Speedwell Prince 7
Betting: 2-1 Wishing, 9-2 Call Equiname, 6-1 Speedwell Prince, 7-1 Hawker Hunter, 8-1 Mandys Mantino, 10-1 Wilde Music, 14-1 Persian Saint, The Bostail Fox. 12 runners.

FORM GUIDE - CALL EQUINAME: Heavily backed last time. led to 3 out. soon weakened, 10th of 16, btn over 40l to Lightening Lad (Chepstow 2m8f, Gd-Sft).
SPEEDWELL PRINCE: Led 6th, ridden out to win by 4l from Mr Edgar, with PERSIAN SAINT (rec 11lb) another 3l away 3rd and BLAIR CASTLE (gv 2lb) nk 4th (Ascot 2m8f, Gd-Frm).
WISHING: Always prominent, mistakes 3 out and last, kept on well, btn 19l by Clifton Beat (Newbury 2m8f, Gd)
UP THE JUNCTION: Made all, won by 2l from Koo's Promise (Exeter 2m1f, Gd-Fm).

1.50 FLOWERS IPA NOVICE CHASE 2m 4f 110yds £4,726

201 12/F-132 BERTORNI (17) K Bailey 6-11-6 ... J Osborne
202 6U543-1 LE MELLIE (36) (C) A Jarvis 6-11-6 ... A Maguire
203 000/1- SILVERFORT LAD (216) T Casey 6-11-4 ... M A Fitzgerald
204 P2315-U CRACKING IDEA (14) J Edwards 7-11-0 ... D Bentley
205 221242 SENSITIVE KING (21) (BF) J Jenkins 7-11-0 ... P Carberry
206 62410-P EVANGELICA (11) M Pipe 5-10-8 ... D Bridgwater

TOP FORM TIPS: Bertorni 8, Le Mellie 7
Betting: 6-4 Bertorni, 2-1 Le Mellie, 9-2 Cracking Idea, 11-2 Silverfort Lad, 14-1 Evangelica, 20-1 Sensitive King. 6 runners.

FORM GUIDE - BERTORNI: Chased winner until outpaced 8th, stayed on from 2 out, 2nd of 4, btn 16l by Storm Falcon (Cheltenham 2m8f, Gd-Fm)
LE MELLIE: Led 10th and blundered and headed 3 out, regained lead app last, ran on, was by 29l from Pridwell (Cheltenham 2m5f, Gd-Fm).
SILVERFORT LAD: Led 2 out, stayed on well, was by 29l from Swordbender in hunter-chase (Navan 2m6f, Gd).
CRACKING IDEA: In touch and every chance when blundered and unseated rider 10th in race won by Olympian Warrack 2m4f, Gd
SENSITIVE KING: No chance with winner, btn 20l by The Minister (Hereford 2m4f, Fm).

Channel 4

2.25 MURPHY'S HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 110yds £3,530

301 05/32-11 PADRE MIO (44) (D) C Brooks 7-11-10 ... G Bradley
302 2/12228- KADASTROF (201) (D) R Dickin 5-11-7 ... D Morris
303 13131-0 DREAMS END (217) (D) J Bradley 7-11-3 ... M Hourigan
304 231001- CHIEF MINISTER (189) (D) T Dyer 6-11-1 ... Peter Hobbs
305 222110- HOME COUNTIES (189) (C) (D) D Moffatt 6-11-1 ... D J Moffatt
306 11012-3 STOMPIN (23) (D) Miss H Knight 4-10-12 ... J Osborne
307 11F01/-1 ADMIRAL'S WELL (14) (D) R Akehurst 5-10-8 ... D Bridgwater
308 112- EXPRESS GIFT (299) (D) Mrs M Reveley 8-10-5 ... N Smith
309 2P162-U CHIEF'S SONG (33) (CD) S Dow 5-10-5 ... A Maguire
310 3F243-1 ROMANCER (422) (D) N Twiston-Davies 4-10-4 ... T Jenks
311 13112-0 WHITE WILLOW (147) (D) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-2 ... Mr M H Naughton (7)
312 UF3F64- FRICKLEY (196) (D) F Murphy 9-10-2 ... P Carberry
313 3/46-32 LONESOME TRAIN (38) (D) (BF) C Weedon 6-10-0 ... S Fairless (3)
314 051U40- SUNSENNELL SPECIAL (169) (D) Mrs P Dutfield 4-10-0 ... A McCabe
315 : 5F6-33 BOOKCASE (7) (D) D Elsworth 8-10-0 ... A Procter (3)

TOP FORM TIPS: Romancer 9, Chief's Song 7, Admiral's Well 6
Betting: 9-2 Admiral's Well, 6-1 Stompin, 7-1 Express Gift, Romancer, 8-1 Padre Mio, 10-1 Chief's Song, Home Counties, Chief Minister, 14-1 Kadastrof, Frickley. 15 runners.

FORM GUIDE - PADRE MIO: Chased leader until led app 2 out, ran on well, won by 1l from Nordic Thorn (Leicester 2m, Gd)
CHIEF MINISTER: Improved effort in valuable handicap final start last season, won by 3l from Eurolink The Lad, with HOME COUNTIES (gv 8lb) last of 13 (Haydock 2m, Gd-Fm).
STOMPIN: Held up, brief effort to challenge 3 out, no extra from next. 3l 3rd to Clifton Beat (Newbury 2m8f, Gd)
ADMIRAL'S WELL: Smart stayer on Flat, last time having first run over hurdles for 17 months, won by 2½l from Nor Vintage (Ascot 2m8f, Gd-Fm)
EXPRESS GIFT: Led 3 out, trotted up by 9l from HOME COUNTIES (gve 20lb) (Carlisle 2m1f, Sft)
ROMANCER: Behind until headway 4th, led 5th, ran on well, won by 1½l from New Inn (Chepstow 2m5f, Gd)
LONESOME TRAIN: Every chance 2 out, not quicken flat, btn 7l by Chicago a Best (Stratford 2m8f, Gd-Fm)

Channel 4

3.00 MACKESON GOLD CUP HANDICAP CHASE 3m 4f 110yds £36,502

401 32111-1 COULTON (20) (C) (D) O Sherwood 8-12-0 ... J Osborne
402 5/2152/- BRADBURY STAR (241) (CD) J Gifford 10-12-0 ... P Hide
403 2111U21- DUBLIN FLYER (219) (C) (D) T Forster 9-11-8 ... R Powell
404 3005P-3 SECOND SCHEDUAL (27) (C) Miss A McMahon 10-10-13 ... K O'Brien
405 3201-31 EGYPT MILL PRINCE (14) (C) (D) Mrs J Pitman 9-10-9 ... W Marston
406 11380-2 AMTRAK EXPRESS (20) (D) N Henderson 8-10-7 ... J R Kavanagh
407 02252-1 BUCKBOARD BOUNCE (32) (D) G Richards 8-10-6 ... P Carberry
408 3F143 BAVARD DIEU (7) (D) M Cunningham 7-10-0 ... A P McCoy
409 11531-2 BIG MATT (14) (D) N Henderson 7-10-0 ... M A Fitzgerald
410 32252-1 GNOME'S TYCOON (14) (D) J H Johnson 9-10-0 ... A Maguire
411 /F111-F POSTAGE STAMP (101) (D) F Murphy 8-10-0 ... G Bradley
412 13-434 ARDNEILOT (86) (D) (BF) P Bowen 8-10-0 ... D Bridgwater ★

TOP FORM TIPS: Egypt Mill Prince 8, Dublin Flyer 7, Coulton 6
Betting: 11-4 Coulton, 9-2 Dublin Flyer, 7-1 Buckboard Bounce, Big Matt, Egypt Mill Prince, 8-1 Second Schedual, Bradbury Star, 10-1 Amtrak Express. 12 runners.

FORM GUIDE - COULTON: Made all, ran on strongly to bt AMTRAK EXPRESS (rec 15lb) so impression from 3 out (Wincanton 2m5f, Fm).
BRADBURY STAR: Winner of this race in last 2 seasons. Unraced since last March when no extra from 3 out, beaten clear last 2 out in Grade 1 contest won by Viking Flagship, with EGYPT MILL PRINCE (levels) led to 3 out, soon no extra, 37l 7th (Cheltenham 2m, Sft).
DUBLIN FLYER: Spectacular effort under 12st last April, jumped boldly and well, led from 4th, kept on strongly, bt Tourers Prince by 9l, with BUCKBOARD BOUNCE (rec 8lb) miked with, headway from 3 out, kept on without threatening principals, another 12l further back 5th (Aintree 2m6f, Gd).
SECOND SCHEDUAL: Runner-up in this race last year. On reappearance, 30l 3rd to Feathered Gale with BAVARD DIEU (rec 18lb) another 7l away 4th (Limerick 3m, Gd).
EGYPT MILL PRINCE: Challenged 2 out, led last, bt BIG MATT (rec 18lb) headway from rear 3 out, kept on well run-in, by 1l (Ascot 2m, Gd-Fm).
BUCKBOARD BOUNCE: Waited with, headway halfway, led last, bt Mellbank by 5l (Newbury 2m4f, Gd-Fm).
GNOME'S TYCOON: Led 3 out, ran on well, bt De Jordaan by 4l (Wetherby 2m4f, Gd-Fm).

Channel 4

3.35 FLOWERS ORIGINAL HANDICAP CHASE 2m 3f 110yds £10,908

501 51F21P- EARTH SUMMIT (200) (C) N Twiston-Davies 7-12-0 ... T Jenks ★
502 21101-2 WILLSFORD (14) (C) Mrs J Pitman 12-12-0 ... W Marston
503 F/3221- ROMAN QUEST (198) (C) T Casey 8-11-12 ... M A Fitzgerald
504 11021F- FLYER'S NAP (196) (C) R Alner 8-11-2 ... Mr P Henley (3)
505 11430-5 GOLD CAP (42) (CD) P Hobbs 10-10-12 ... G McCourt
506 1U-1411 STRAIGHT TALK (7) P Nicholls 8-10-6 ... A P McCoy
507 0/UR3P-U CYTHERE (10) J Gifford 11-10-0 ... L Aspell (5)
508 6F083-5 PETTY BRIDGE (18) A James 11-10-0 ... A Maguire

TOP FORM TIPS: Flyer's Nap 8, Willsford 7, Straight Talk 6
Betting: 9-4 Straight Talk, 7-2 Willsford, 11-2 Earth Summit, 6-1 Rough Quest, Flyer's Nap, 8-1 Gold Cap, 20-1 Petty Bridge, 33-1 Cythere. 8 runners.

FORM GUIDE - EARTH SUMMIT: Best effort last season, won Peter Marsh Chase by 19l from Chatam (Haydock 3m, Sft).
WILLSFORD: Behind until stayed on well from 2 out, btn 15l by STRAIGHT TALK (rec 26lb), led 11th, clear 3 out, ran on well (Ascot 3m8f, Gd-Fm).
ROMAN QUEST: Final start in Ireland, won by 29l from Feathered Gale, with FLYER'S NAP (rec 3lb), behind when fell last (Punchestown 3m1f, Gd).
GOLD CAP: Tailed off on reappearance when 33l 5th of 8 to STRAIGHT TALK (rec 19lb), bt James Pigg to hd (Chepstow 3m, Gd)
STRAIGHT TALK: Good effort again last time when led 10th, ran on well, won by 9l from Staunch Rival (Sandown 3m8f, Gd-Fm)

Channel 4

4.10 FUGGLES IMPERIAL HANDICAP HURDLE 3m 2f £7,968

601 1F121-1 CAB ON TARGET (14) (C) Mrs M Reveley 8-12-0 ... G Lee (3)
602 112111- MORGANS HARBOUR (216) Mrs M Reveley 9-10-4 ... N Smith
603 11140- TRICKLE LAD (218) F Murphy 6-10-2 ... P Carberry
604 F1121R- GREENHILL TARE AWAY (241) (C) P Hobbs 7-10-0 ... Peter Hobbs
605 P/221FP- GILLAN COVE (232) R Alner 6-10-0 ... Mr P Henley (3)
606 11-P532 HOLY JOE (17) D Burchell 13-10-0 ... D J Burchell

TOP FORM TIPS: Morgans Harbour 9, Cab On Target 7
Betting: 13-8 Cab On Target, 2-1 Morgans Harbour, 9-2 Trickle Lad, 6-1 Greenhill Tare Away, 10-1 Gillan Cove, 25-1 Holy Joe. 6 runners.

FORM GUIDE - CAB ON TARGET: In touch, shaken up to lead 3 out, soon clear, bt Avro Anson by 5l in slowly-run race (Wetherby 3m1f, Gd-Fm)
MORGANS HARBOUR: Stayed on strongly to lead close home, bt Jack Button by sh hd, with TRICKLE LAD (levels) tailed off 17l of 12 finishers (Kempton 3m8f, Gd-Fm).
GREENHILL TARE AWAY: Mistakes, behind when tried to relume and unseated rider 11th in chase won by Brief Gale (Cheltenham 3m1f, Sft).
HOLY JOE: Chased leader, led 9th, bt last, soon headed and btn, 3l 2nd of 6 to Smith Too (Cheltenham 2m7f, Gd-Fm)

Ayr runners and riders

12.35 Prophets Honour
1.05 Earlymorning Light
1.40 Abbot Of Furness
2.10 One Man
2.45 Lisdalshan
3.15 Woo River
3.45 Seldom But Severe

Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest NH outing.

12.35 SEAN GRAHAM SPORTING LIFE JUVENILE HURDLE 2YO 2m £2,502

1 361 DONE WELL (24) (D) P Monteith 11-6 ... A Dobbin
2 BARK'N'BITE Mrs M Reveley 11-0 ... P Niven
3 BATTERY BOY W Storey 11-0 ... D Byrne
4 BERKELEY BOUNDER R McKellar 11-0 ... M Dwyer
5 CASPIAN'S RISK T Dyer 11-0 ... B Harding (3)
6 CELEBRATION CARE Miss L Perratt 11-0 ... R Guest
7 GRATE BRITISH E Waymes 11-0 ... R Dunwoody
8 HOT BISKIZE Miss K Whitehouse 11-0 ... W Humphreys
9 KARAVLAR W Storey 11-0 ... J Supple (3)
10 REGIA EXPRESS M B-Hain 11-0 ... D Wilkinson
11 PROPHETS HONOUR P Haslam 11-0 ... M Foster
12 RAZBAK H Fisher 11-0 ... M Moloney
13 SERVICTA Mrs M Reveley 11-0 ... G Cahill (7)
14 TEKLAY'S FATCH J Goldie 11-0 ... F Perrett (3)
15 TO PROVE A POINT J O'Neill 11-0 ... A Roche (3)
16 XAIPETE G Moore 11-0 ... J Callaghan
17 FINAL FLING Denys Smith 10-9 ... T Reed
18 KHALIDSEE N Chamberlain 10-9 ... R Supple
19 33 ON A PEDESTAL (9) Mrs J Ramsden 10-9 ... N Garrity
20 SALDUNA T Dyer 10-9 ... A Linton (7)

TOP FORM TIPS: Done Well 8, On A Pedestal 6
Betting: 3-1 Bark'n'bite, 4-1 Done Well, 6-1 Prophets Honour, 7-1 Berkeley Bounder, On A Pedestal, 10-1 Sedvicta, 12-1 Grate British. 20 runners.

1.05 SEAN GRAHAM 'COATBRIDGE' NOVICE CHASE 3m 1f £2,992

1 23231F- LIE DETECTOR (166) C Parker 7-11-6 ... D Parker (3)
2 5 BARRISTORMER (14) E Elliott 9-11-0 ... Mr R Johnson (5)
3 21443-P EARLYMORNING LIGHT (9) (BF) G Richards 6-11-0 ... A Dobbin
4 33122- ISLAND CHIEF (203) P Beaumont 6-11-0 ... R Supple
5 11125U- IVY HOUSE (236) J O'Neill 7-11-0 ... M Dwyer
6 000/4- LAUDER SQUARE (722) T Dun 7-11-0 ... T Reed
7 121P/51- SEVEN TOWERS (336) Mrs M Reveley 6-11-0 ... P Niven
8 00P- CANAILLOU II (241) Mrs S Bramall 5-10-12 ... J Burke

TOP FORM TIPS: Earlymorning Light 8, Lie Detector 6
Betting: 7-4 Earlymorning Light, 9-4 Ivy House, 7-2 Seven Towers, 6-1 Island Chief, 10-1 Lie Detector, 25-1 Canaillou II, Lauder Square. 8 runners.

1.40 SEAN GRAHAM 'IRVINE' HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 4f £3,615

1 221001- SPARKY GAYLE (206) (CD) C Parker 5-12-0 ... B Storey
2 2-12 PORPHYROS (38) (BF) K Bailey 4-11-12 ... R Dunwoody
3 1212- CUTTHROAT KID (166) (D) Mrs M Reveley 5-11-9 ... C McCormack (7)
4 F441-5 MASTER OF TROY (31) (CD) C Parker 7-11-8 ... D Parker (3) ★
5 131U12- SUNDAY BISKY'WECKO (256) W Storey 4-11-4 ... J Supple (3)
6 3421-54 WEAVER GEORGE (7) J Hetherton 5-11-4 ... M Dwyer
7 6F42- MANOR OF FURNESS (176) (CD) G Richards 11-11-4 ... A Dobbin
8 004300- REVE DE VALSE (636) Denys Smith 8-11-4 ... B Harding (3)
9 13- PRIDE OF MAY (351) C Fairhurst 4-11-4 ... J Callaghan ★
10 410R13- NICHOLAS PLANT (177) (CD) J Goldie 8-11-3 ... A Watt (7)
11 0015-53 AIDNI MEMORIES (31) Mrs B Broad 8-10-10 ... T Reed
12 5UR-214 DESERT FIGHTER (10) (D) (BF) Mrs M Reveley 4-10-10 ... P Niven
13 FR30/-1 JOHNS THE BOY (1153) (CD) N Mason 10-9 ... G Neworth (7)
14 11F5P1/- LOTHIAN PILOT (646) (D) L Lungo 8-10-4 ... F Perrett (3)
15 142422- TOPOTHEWORLDRACING (168) P Beaumont 5-10-2 ... R Supple

TOP FORM TIPS: Desert Fighter 8, Abbot Of Furness 7, Weaver George 6
Betting: 5-1 Porphyros, 6-1 Desert Fighter, Cuttthroat Kid, 7-1 Abbot Of Furness, 8-1 Sparky Gayle, Johns The Boy, Weaver George, 12-1 Nicholas Plant. 15 runners.

2.10 SEAN GRAHAM 'MOTHERWELL' CHASE (LIMITED HANDICAP) 2m 1f £10,300

1 12/U210- JODAMI (246) (C) P Beaumont 10-12-0 ... M Dwyer
2 P/F4124- COGENT (196) J Glover 11-11-3 ... Mr C Bonner (3)
3 10/11UF- ONE MAN (259) (CD) G Richards 7-10-12 ... A Dobbin
4 1P13L0- WHISPERING STEEL (242) (CD) K Bailey 9-10-9 ... R Dunwoody
5 5320P-P ANTONIN (32) (D) Mrs S Bramall 7-10-7 ... J Burke
6 FP1/1F3- MIDNIGHT CALLER (206) Noel T Chance 9-10-7 ... Mr R Johnson (5)
7 1P111F- STRONG DEEL (301) (C) W Reed 7-10-7 ... T Reed

TOP FORM TIPS: Cogent 8, One Man 7
Betting: 13-8 One Man, 9-4 Jodami, 4-1 Cogent, Whispering Steel, 20-1 Midnight Caller, Antonin, 33-1 Strong Deel. 7 runners.

2.45 SEAN GRAHAM 'HAMILTON' HANDICAP HURDLE 2m £3,586

1 6/2004- DEVILRY (196) (CD) G Moore 5-11-10 ... J Callaghan
2 120F4- CHANTRY BEATH (285) (D) G Thornton 4-11-9 ... M Horrocks (7)
3 12/100- MARTIN EXECUTIVE (786) (D) B Mikkelsen 7-11-5 ... N Bentley ★
4 1- CHANTY'S SAGA (449) L Lungo 5-11-3 ... T Reed
5 465-0F LIDLATHEN (15) Mrs M Reveley 5-11-0 ... P Niven
6 620440- KALIKO (346) (D) J Goldie 5-10-13 ... F Perrett (3)
7 09/423- BELTON ROOMS (231) Mrs Alisa Russell 6-10-8 ... Mr S Lees
8 /104-00 BEES CIRCLE (1) Lindsay Woods 6-10-4 ... D Fisher
9 1FP00- STEADFAST ELITE (946) J O'Neill 4-10-1 ... A Roche (3)
10 05/30-0 THROGMORFOALICE (30) J Goldie 7-10-0 ... A Watt (7)
11 4U/003- MILITON BLUES (330) (CD) T Mullen 7-10-0 ... A Dobbin
12 P0D04U- MY SISTER LUCY (330) Miss K Whitehouse 5-10-0 ... W Humphreys

TOP FORM TIPS: Lidlathen 8, Kaliko 7, Chantry Beath 6
Betting: 2-1 Lidlathen, 4-1 Chantry Beath, 5-1 Chantry's Saga, 6-1 Devilry, 8-1 Kaliko, 12-1 Steadfast Elite, Martini Executive. 12 runners.

3.15 SEAN GRAHAM 'BARRHEAD' HANDICAP CHASE 2m £4,743

1 11113-1 WEE RIVER (21) (D) G Moore 8-11-10 ... J Callaghan
2 022122- POLITICAL TOWER (196) (CD) R Nixon 8-11-3 ... T Reed
3 5P342- RODEO STAR (176) (CD) N Tinkler 9-11-1 ... R Dunwoody ★
4 P545-32 BEAUCADEAU (15) (D) M Barnes 9-11-0 ... P Waggott
5 FP6-112 BELDINE (14) (D) (BF) P Monteith 10-10-11 ... A Dobbin
6 112P20 REGAL ROMPER (7) (D) Mrs S Smith 7-10-7 ... R Guest
7 123U44- SONSIE MO (274) (D) Mrs S Bradburne 10-10-0 ... B Storey

TOP FORM TIPS: Wee River 8, Political Tower 7
Betting: evens Wee River, 6-1 Rodeo Star, 7-1 Political Tower, 8-1 Regal Romper, Beldine, 10-1 Beaucadeau, 25-1 Sonsie Mo. 7 runners.

3.45 TRIPLEPRINT STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT RACE 2m £1,805

1 1- CITTADINO (336) C Thornton 5-11-11 ... B Grattan (7)
2 BRIGHT DESTINY J Goldie 4-11-4 ... F Perrett (3)
3- GRAND CRU Mrs M Reveley 4-11-4 ... C McCormack (7)
4 HENRY HOOLET P Monteith 6-11-4 ... A Dobbin
5 5- HIGHGRATH (203) Mrs M Reveley 4-11-4 ... P Niven
6 LUCKY TARRIER N Chamberlain 4-11-4 ... Miss C Metcalfe (7)
7 MEESONS EXPRESS D Eddy 5-11-4 ... B Storey
8 3- PAPPA CHARLIE (245) C Parker 4-11-4 ... D Parker (3)
9 QATTARA W McKeown 5-11-4 ... A Sanford
10 0 ROOSECOTE (18) R Fisher 4-11-4 ... M Moloney
11 00- RUSTIC WARRIOR (228) J Hellens 5-11-4 ... B Harding (3)
12 SULTAN BUT SEVERE E Elliott 5-11-4 ... Mr R Johnson (5)
13 SHANAGOGH G Moore 4-11-4 ... J Callaghan
14 SUAS LEAT J Jefferson 5-11-4 ... M Dwyer
15 THE STITCHER L Lungo 5-11-4 ... T Reed ★
16 645- DECENT FAIRWAY (288) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-13 ... M Harrington (7)
17 2- DECENT PENNY (203) Mrs M Reveley 6-10-13 ... G Cahill (7)
18 0 KUDOS PRINCESS (18) Mrs A Naughton 5-10-13 ... M Foster

Betting: 3-1 Cittadino, 9-2 Meesons Express, 5-1 Decent Penny, 7-1 Grand Cru, 8-1 Highbeath, Suas Leat, 16 runners.

● Blinkered today for the first time: AYR: 1.40 Pride Of May; 3.45 The Stitcher. CHELTENHAM: 1.15 Wishing. MARKET RASEN: 12.50 Deep Dawn, Quick Decision; 3.25 Hicksons Choice. WINDSOR: 1.00 Colt d'Or, Kilcoran Bay; 1.30 So Audacious; 2.00 Silks And Studs, United Front. WOLVERHAMPTON: 7.00 Distinct Beauty; 9.00 Frances Mary; 9.30 Harry Welsh.

Wolverhampton tonight – all-weather Flat

7.00 Honestly
7.30 Dunitin
8.00 Celestial Choir
8.30 Sallornaite
9.00 Poly By Stanlan
9.30 Tremendiate

Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest outing.

7.00 ASH MAIDEN STAKES 2YO 7f £2,775

1 0005 ANGUS MCCOATUP (28) B McMahon 9-0 ... G Carter 4
2 00 FLAGSTAFF (52) G L Moore 9-0 ... S Whitworth 2
3 ALLSTARS DANCER T Naughton 8-9 ... J D Smith (5) 10
4 003 ARCADY (12) P Waluyn 8-9 ... R Hughes 1
5 BALMORAL PRINCESS J Peacock 8-9 ... Dale Gibson 8
6 0 DARGEBOUS WATERS (25) P Murphy 8-9 ... R Winterfield (7) 6
7 60 DISTINCT BEAUTY (8) W O'Gorman 8-9 ... Eileen O'Gorman 7★
8 0603 HONESTLY (14) B Smart 8-9 ... S Sanders 3
9 05 PATRIO (11) M Johnston 8-9 ... D McKeown 5
10 0 SWEET WILHELMINA (19) Lord Huntingdon 8-9 ... D Harrison 9

TOP FORM TIPS: Arcady 8, Honestly 7, Patrio 6
Betting: 9-4 Arcady, 9-2 Patrio, 11-2 Angus McCoatup, 6-1 Distinct Beauty, Honestly, 8-1 Sweet Wilhelmina, 12-1 Flagstaff. 10 runners.

7.30 C. BEECH & SONS STEEL LIMITED STAKES 1m 4f £2,085

1 312133 MR BEAN (153) (CD) K Burke 5-9-7 ... J Tate 2
2 0200-00 BOLD ACRE (16) D Burchell 5-9-5 ... R Price 11
3 223150 DVORAK (16) (D) R Harris 4-9-5 ... A Mackay 1
4 04-1325 ROUSTTO (14) (CD) R Hollinshead 7-9-5 ... T Ives 10
5 05-60 CLAQUE (197) D Chapman 3-8-12 ... A Culhane 7
6 6226 KALAMATA (11) J Glover 3-8-12 ... S D Williams 9
7 03008 PHARLY REEF (116) D Burchell 3-8-12 ... J Quinn 3
8 342102 DOMITIA (16) M Bell 3-8-9 ... M Fenton 8
9 0-00014 ELLY FLEETFOOT (137) B Meehan 3-8-9 ... R Hughes 4
10 20320 COLOSSE (400) J Eyre 3-8-7 ... R Lappin 5
11 04-4003 DUCKING (18) J Pinsharon 3-8-7 ... D Harrison 6
12 05053 KNOTALLY WOOD (21) J Hill 3-8-7 ... M Henry (3) 12

TOP FORM TIPS: Mr Bean 8, Domitia 7, Ducking 6
Betting: 4-1 Knotally Wood, 5-1 Ducking, 8-1 Mr Bean, Domitia, 9-1 Dvorak, 10-1 Roustto, Elly Fleetfoot, Kalamata, 14-1 Colosse. 12 runners.

8.00 KS (WESTERN) HANDICAP 1m 100yds £2,909

1 501000 RISKY ROBBO (18) (D) G Bravery 3-9-13 ... M Fenton 9
2 058000 WINTERBRIDGE LAD (7) (CD) P Evans 5-9-11 ... R Hughes 1★
3 16-3040 PENGAMON (106) H Collingridge 3-9-11 ... J Quinn 13
4 3-12004 LYFORD LAW (147) J Gosden 3-9-6 ... T Ives 11
5 240500 CELESTIAL CHOIR (14) (C) (D) J Eyre 5-9-6 ... K Fallon 10
6 32125 FAR AHEAD (18) (D) J Eyre 3-9-4 ... R Lappin 7
7 550403 RAMBO WALTZER (84) S Norton 3-9-4 ... O Carter 3
8 313011 HEATHYARDS LADY (14) (CD) R Hollinshead 4-9-2 ... F Lynch (7) 6
9 440060 Q FACTOR (8) D Haydn Jones 3-8-9 ... A Mackay 12
10 324006 TATIKA (123) G Wragg 5-8-12 ... G Milligan (7) 2
11 401604 DESERT INVADER (14) (C) (D) D Chapman 4-8-11 ... A Culhane 4
12 404460 POLONEZ PRIMA (98) (D) J Spearing 5-8-10 ... A McGlone 5
13 500000 SANDMOOR DENIM (28) (CD) S Bowring 6-8-10 ... S Webster 8

TOP FORM TIPS: Celestial Choir 8, Heathyards Lady 7, Sandmoor Denim 6
Betting: 5-1 Heathyards Lady, 11-2 Celestial Choir, 7-1 Winterbridge Lad, Sandmoor Denim, Rambo Waltzer, 8-1 Lyford Law, 10-1 Far Ahead. 13 runners.

8.30 DAILY STAR TOP TIPSTER HANDICAP 6f £3,884

1 001114 CROFT POOL (7) (D) J Glover 4-10-0 ... S D Williams 10
2 011200 SAILORMAITE (59) (CD) S Bowring 4-9-13 ... S Webster 4
3 204330 CASTEL ROSSELO (164) (D) R Harris 5-9-11 ... A Mackay 13
4 441422 STOPPERS BROW (28) (D) G L Moore 3-9-10 ... S Whitworth 8★
5 220-100 ASHDOWN (96) (CD) M Johnston 5-9-9 ... J Fanning 1
6 042010 LITTLE ISSIE (7) (CD) P Evans 4-9-9 ... K Fallon 7
7 2-00010 INHERENT MAGIC (35) (BF) W Muir 6-9-9 ... S Sanders 6
8 310300 MR BERGERAC (28) (D) B Palling 4-9-9 ... T Sprake 5
9 440003 LOVEYOUMILLIONS (32) (D) M Johnston 3-9-7 ... D McKeown 8★
10 210601 ELLE SHAPED (7) A Bailey 5-9-6 ... D Wright (3) 3
11 001000 CRYSTAL LOOP (44) (CD) A Bailey 3-9-2 ... G Bardwell 12
12 3-16330 MORDAN RAI

Rugby Union

Guts and the rare gift of Evans the record

Robert Armstrong on the iron and pride burning inside a national hero who sets a Welsh benchmark today with his 56th cap

TWO Welsh wizards of the 1970s, Gareth Edwards and Gerald Davies, have definite views on why Ieuan Evans today becomes his country's most capped player with his 56th international appearance, against Fiji at the Arms Park. Heroic is an over-used word in Test rugby but there is no other way to sum up the courage and stamina that have enabled the Llanelli, Wales and Lions wing to overtake J P R Williams (55 caps), not to mention Edwards (53) and Davies (46).

Quick, strong and intensely competitive, Evans has survived a catalogue of injuries and years of self-destructive turmoil in Welsh rugby to set a record that may never be broken. Five shoulder dislocations, double fractures of the leg and ankle and the perverse whims of selectors who took the captaincy away from him shortly before this year's World Cup have not deterred the quietly spoken patriot from Pontardulais.

As Edwards pointed out: "In Wales we are quick, sometimes too quick, to put players on a pedestal, only to find that all too often they don't match our expectations. For a long time now Ieuan has been on the highest pedestal of all and not even a cruel series of broken bones has knocked him off.

"He is truly a great player. His electrifying pace and deft change of direction have brought spectators to the edge of their seats the world over. That is a rare gift."

Davies, who held the national record of 20 Test tries jointly with Edwards until Evans topped it last year, believes Evans is a profound source of pride to the Welsh in an era of mediocrity. "Ieuan has been around in the dark days when Wales suffered humiliation after humiliation and the wings hardly ever received a decent pass," says Davies.

"Comparing players of different generations is a pointless exercise but, if I were to pick a World XV, Ieuan would be on one wing with David Campese on the other."

To say Evans has a powerful sense of identity is a major understatement. In his autobiography Bread of Heaven (Mainstream, £14.99) this home-loving Welsh-speaker, now 31, includes several pictures of his parents John and Margaret whom he credits with providing the bedrock of

'In rugby, half the battle is in your mind, no matter how talented you are'

his rugby career. In one family snap the smiling trio are huddled together with a large stuffed lion closer than a tight five: one for all, all for one.

"My Mum and Dad have always been willing to give advice and support but they never put pressure on me to succeed, as frequently happens with players in their formative years," said Evans.

"I've always been a competitive sportaholic even when playing soccer in the fields behind our house, and my Dad encouraged that instinct — he was a capable rugby player in his own right with Aberavon.

"In rugby half the battle is in your mind, no matter how talented you are — you always need mental toughness and mental agility to get through an international game. I have a hunger to keep proving myself to myself and that desire has helped every time I got injured."

Unlike many outstanding Welsh players Evans managed to avoid the one-way trip north to rugby league, partly because his job as a car-leasing executive gave him financial security but mainly because he could not bear to tear himself away from his roots. Strictly a one-club man, Evans has set great store on pure enjoyment which the Scarlets and the Lions, if not Wales, satisfied in full measure.

"Simply, there is no place like home," said Evans. "I am happier here, I'm with people I know and love, and fortunately I earn a reasonable living which still gives me time to play rugby. When you break down league contracts on an annual basis, they are not quite as rewarding as the initial sum might lead you to believe. Staying always seemed a better option than going.

"Recently I saw the film Braveheart, which showed the strength of the Scottish identity. Well, Wales is no different. I never get a greater buzz than when I run out to represent my country. Some people spend a fortune on artificial substances to feel the buzz I get from running around wearing the red jersey of Wales.

"Your mind detaches from your body a little and you go with the flow, with the sound and the passion that the Arms Park generates. Nothing can replace that."

In early 1993 Evans secured his place in the Wales pantheon with a match-winning try against England that was conjured out of nothing — seconds before Rory Underwood and Jon Webb saw the danger, he set off on an 80-metre dash down the right, hacked on and made the touchdown with time to spare.

"That day was very special because Wales were given no chance," recalled Evans. "In that situation we are capable of turning up trumps. Certain tries do stick in your mind, such as the one I got that helped Llanelli beat Australia. I remember the try I scored against Scotland in 1988 because of the electric atmosphere. And, though I had to run barely a yard for the Lions' try that won the Test series in Australia, that was one of the most important."

And what of the future? "Nowadays you have to do a tremendous amount of work off the field to be strong enough and quick enough to cope, and that in turn makes a big impact on your lifestyle.

"I believe there's no reason why you cannot carry on playing international rugby until you are 34 or 35. The development of scientific fitness regimes can help you keep your power and speed. You're as good as what you do on the pitch; it's no longer a question of how old you are."

Hwyl-good factor . . . my greatest buzz is running out to represent Wales, says Evans

International: Wales v Fiji

Wales must be tight or run a risk of fright

Robert Armstrong

WALES have studied the Fijians closely enough in their six matches to date to know tight, street-wise rugby offers the best route to victory today at the Arms Park. Emphatic wins over Wales A, Treorchy and Llanelli have underlined the dangers of allowing Fiji space to capitalise on their sleight of hand and speed.

This type of fixture, against second-rank opponents on an upward curve, has caught the Welsh off balance several times during the past decade.

Kevin Bowring, the latest Welsh coach to put his head on the block, will not survive until Christmas if Fiji win today. Characteristically the Welsh Rugby Union asked Bowring to negotiate this tricky staging post on a caretaker basis after Alex Evans quietly withdrew, partly for medical reasons.

Bowring's top priority must be to restore basic organisation to the pack and develop the bread-and-butter qualities that have been missing since Alan Davies was ousted as coach last spring. Whatever retrospective judgments Davies' critics may like to make, his Test sides were never a pushover up-front. The same cannot be said for Wales in their recent defeats by New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa.

Sadly the Welsh often give the impression of forgetting nothing and learning nothing when it comes to the rudiments of international rugby. While every other nation nowadays allows the coach a free hand to pick the team, the WRU has reverted to the discredited system of using up to five selectors.

One hopes Bowring has enough independence to ignore one selector, JPR Williams, who last month indulged in the empty rhetoric of calling for more "passion" from the national side.

Worse, JPR has done nothing to boost the confidence of Neil Jenkins, an under-rated fly-half whose skills in attack and defence have earned Wales far more points than many predecessors achieved. JPR's notion that the Welsh public reject No. 10s like Jenkins who tackle is absurdly out of touch: defiance and determination, qualities Jenkins and JPR have always displayed, are pre-requisites of Test rugby.

Certainly the Fijian side, which includes 12 players based in New Zealand, will provide a quick, powerful challenge of the type Wales are more accustomed to from Western Samoa. Fiji's new policy of using expatriates for tours seems likely to improve their overseas results and lay the foundation for a place in the 1999 World Cup.

Big, speedy backs like Rayasi, Bale, Bari and Waqa are certain to disrupt Wales's defence if given the chance to move the ball; and most of Fiji's forwards are no slouches in broken play. Still, the 6ft 10in Derwyn Jones ought to win abundant line-out possession, with a little help from his friends, and force the tourists into a close-quarter contest running counter to their instincts.

Hard, disciplined work will be required from the Llanelli flanker Craig Quinnell in his first international to subdue a Fijian back row that tends to make up in fitness what it lacks in technique. Fortunately Taylor and the captain Humphreys have the experience to keep the tiller steady and ensure a high rate of ball retention.

If Jenkins kicks his penalties, Wales should keep their nose in front but it could be too close to be comfortable.

WALES: J Thomas (Llanelli); I Evans (Llanelli), G Thomas (Bridgend), N Davies (Llanelli), W Proctor (Llanelli); N Jenkins (Pontypridd), Andy Moore (Cardiff); C Loader (Swansea), J Humphreys (Cardiff, capt), L Mustoe (Cardiff), Andrew Moore (Swansea), D Jones (Cardiff), C Quinnell (Llanelli), H Taylor (Cardiff), M Bennett (Cardiff). Replacements: S Hill (Cardiff), A Williams (Swansea), R Howley (Bridgend), S Williams (Neath), S John (Llanelli), G Jenkins (Swansea).

FIJI (probable): F Rayasi; P Bale, S Sorovaki, L Little, M Bari; J Waqa, J Rauluni; J Veitayaki (capt), G Smith, P Naruvula, A Nadolo, E Katalau, I Tawake, D Rouse, T Tamanivalu.

International: France v New Zealand

France in turmoil as All Blacks approach

Ian Malin

AT the Parc des Sports in Toulouse this afternoon the "try from the end of the world" at Eden Park will seem like a world away.

In the second Test against New Zealand in Auckland 15 months ago Jean-Luc Sadourny rounded off an end-to-end move for the glorious try that sealed France's first win in a series over the All Blacks. Now Jonah Lomu and the All Blacks are in town for the first of another two-Test series and France's world is falling apart.

France's recent history has been angst-ridden even by their standards. A creditable third place in the World Cup was not enough to save their coach Pierre Berbizier from the guillotine after a relatively calm four years. His sacking came two months ago when Bernard Lapasset was re-elected president of the French federation in an election of which Saddam Hussein would have been proud. Lapasset was the only candidate.

This episode was played out alongside the sub-plot in which three of those World Cup heroes, Thierry Lacroix, Olivier Roumat and Laurent Cabannes, decided to remain in South Africa to play in the Currie Cup. Lapasset promptly told them they would not be considered for this Test and the second international in Paris next week.

Then on Thursday Andre Herrero, France's new manager, announced he was quitting after today's match in a dispute over ticket allocation to players and selection policy. The players have been critical of Herrero, whom they accuse of dragging his feet on the matter of pay.

The New Zealanders, whose World Cup squad each received around £40,000, are believed to be getting £12,000 each for this eight-match tour of Italy and France. Lapasset has rejected his players' recent pay claim.

The in-fighting has done France's chances of repeating last year's historic victories nothing but harm. Their side today has a callow look with two 20-year-old centres, Richard Dourthe and Thomas Castaignède, making their home international debuts.

France's new coach, their former flanker Jean-Claude Skrela, has a 21-year-old, Fabien Perlous, replacing Roumat at lock; and the scrum-half Philippe Carbonneau will be playing, like Castaignède, in his home town. The four new men made their bows in last month's Latin Cup victory in Argentina, when Skrela's team scored 18 tries in three games against the hosts, Romania and Italy.

The All Blacks, despite winning all of their five tour games, are not without problems of their own. Two of their brightest World Cup stars, the flanker Josh Kronfeld and the fly-half Andrew Mehrtens, are missing through injury. But such is the New Zealanders' strength in depth that they are replaced by Simon Culhane, in impressive kicking form, and Michael Jones, arguably the world's greatest No. 7.

Because of New Zealand's anger over South Pacific nuclear testing, some wags have dubbed this the Nuclear Test. Many of the All Blacks, politically aware young men by the standard of the average rugby player, are not too well disposed towards the French.

Today's game could well be explosive but could hardly be livelier than the infamous "Battle of Nantes" in 1986, a game which was considered the most brutal in the recent history of international rugby. France unexpectedly beat the All Blacks then. Today the All Blacks are almost certain to blow France out of the water.

● South Africa, the world champions, meet Italy tomorrow in their first overseas foray since they won an emotional World Cup final at home last summer. The outcome at the Olympic Stadium in Rome, is in little doubt but the winning margin will be watched for comparisons with the beaten World Cup finalists New Zealand, who thrashed Italy 70–6 last month.

Italy, demoralised after that defeat, are determined to show that the improvement in their international performances in recent matches has not suddenly evaporated. South Africa, playing under the slogan "Champions Away" and on their way to play England at Twickenham a week today, want to show they can beat the world away from home.

FRANCE: J-L Sadourny; E Ntamack, R Dourthe, T Castaignède, P St André; A Penaud, P Carbonneau; L Benezech, M de Rougemont, C Califano, O Merle, F Perlous, P Benetton, A Carminati, A Benazzi.

NEW ZEALAND: J Wilson; E Rush, F Bunce, W Little, J Lomu; S Culhane, S Forster; O Brown, S Fitzpatrick, C Dowd, R Brooke, I Jones, D Larsen, M Jones, Z Brooke.

Clubman Sharp snubs Scotland

Chris Hewett

ALAN SHARP, the strong-scrummaging Bristol loose-head prop, may have played his last game for Scotland after declaring himself unavailable for international rugby for the rest of the season.

Sharp, first choice for his adopted country until serious back problems interrupted his representative career a year ago, told the selectors of his decision after pulling out of tomorrow's Scotland A match against Western Samoa.

"I simply cannot devote the necessary time at the moment," said Sharp, who missed last season's Five Nations Championship and the World Cup with two broken bones in his spine.

"I'm 100 per cent fit now but I have a young family to consider and there are increasing demands from Bristol as well. We are a young side and as pack leader I feel I should concentrate on my club duties. With contracts coming in at the end of the season, Bristol will want a bigger piece of me anyway.

"More than anything else I want to win a trophy with my home club. I can't say when I will be available for Scotland again but, as far as this season goes, I am no longer up for selection."

Widely considered to be the best pure scrummager in the Courage League, Sharp won England B honours before opting for Scotland three years ago. His decision may well be of interest to Jack Rowell and the England hierarchy.

Jim Telfer and his fellow Scotland selectors will urge him to change his mind, however, especially now that he is back to his formidable best at Bristol.

Johnson says no to Newcastle

MARTIN JOHNSON yesterday became the second England international to turn down the chance to join Rob Andrew's Newcastle.

The 25-year-old lock has followed the example of his clubmate Rory Underwood and decided to stay with Leicester. "Although the offer was substantial, I want to play for Leicester and Leicester only," he said.

"Martin is one of our priceless players," said Tony Russ, Leicester's director of rugby. "We shall see to it that there is no reason he should ever want to play for anyone else."

Johnson has now been able to turn semi-professional, having cut his working hours to 10 days a month with Midland Bank, who have appointed him divisional marketing manager.

● Will Carling is one of seven England players who have decide not to play for their clubs this weekend to ensure their fitness for next week's international against South Africa at Twickenham.

Market Rasen runners and riders

12.50 Taro Card
1.20 Cumbrian Rhapsody
1.50 Garrylough
2.20 Sounds Fyne
2.55 Glipa Vale
3.25 Gorby's Myth
3.55 Peace Lord

2.20 CONSORT TRAVEL HANDICAP HURDLE 3m £2,784

1	P53-280 COUTURE STOCKINGS (25) (D) J Mackie 11-11-13	T Eley
2	02120P- STORM DRUM (450) (D) K Bailey 6-11-9	J Magee (3) ★
3	434141 GEORGE ASHFORD (8) K Morgan 5-11-5	A S Smith
4	25-2120 FREDDIE MUCK (44) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-4	D Walsh (5)
5	342111- FAR OUT (158) O Brennan 9-11-0	M Brennan
6	6/05501- SOUNDS FYNE (210) J FitzGerald 6-10-13	E Callaghan (7)
7	3P-012U MASTER OF THE ROCK (16) J Mackie 6-10-7	E Husband (5) ★
8	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

Windsor eight-race programme

12.30 Robero
1.00 Isaat
1.30 Lucky Dollar
2.00 Court Nap
2.35 Whoo Wonder
3.05 Go Universal
3.40 Hawaiian Sam
4.10 Anisoo (nb)

Going: Hurdles Good, Chase Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.

[illegible]

7	UNITED FRONT R O'Sullivan 10-12	D O'Sullivan
8	22046 WANSTEAD (14) J Jenkins 10-12	J F Titley
9	BELLA SEDONA Lady Herries 10-7	DOUBTFUL
10	BURNT SIENNA J Moore 10-7	W McFarland
11	EQUILIBRIUM J Hills 10-7	J Hills
12	MY DUTCH GIRL Miss B Sanders 10-7	D Gally
13	OUR LITTLE LADY J Banks 10-7	S Kelly
14	STONEHAM GIRL P Butler 10-7	M G

[illegible]

Soccer

FA beaten in fight for TV rights

Russell Thomas

THE Football Association lost the great television battle yesterday, then took its ball home.

Its £118.5 million offer for the Football League's TV rights was withdrawn after the 72 League clubs followed their board's advice and voted unanimously to defer a decision. But, despite the FA's frustrated reaction, there is seemingly still scope for renegotiation between the two sides.

The 72 League chairmen, at a three-hour meeting in London, also heard a presentation of the rival Premier League offer for TV rights by the PL's chief executive Rick Parry who, perhaps significantly, received greater applause afterwards.

Although the message from the FA's director of public affairs David Davies was that the Football League has run out of time, that is effectively what the chairmen have bought. Regarding the rival Premier League deal, Football League officials will learn more at a meeting shortly.

The League had already been given a two-week extension to accept or reject the FA deal, which would see League and Coca-Cola Cup games screened as part of a package also embracing England and FA Cup matches over the Sky, ITV and BBC networks.

After yesterday's rebuff Davies said: "It's deeply disappointing that, after almost six months of debate with the League's representatives, a request for still more time should be made. Well, it isn't available."

But later Davies added: "It is for the Football League now to decide whether they want to try to re-open negotiations at some point in the future. That's for them."

The Football League's president Gordon McKeag said it was "disappointed but not entirely surprised by the FA's decision. But we find it encouraging that the door remains open with the FA."

The FA's offer was worth £18.5 million to the League for 1996-97 and £25 million per annum for the following four years.

Parry described the vote as "the right decision for football". The Premier League deal offers a minimum 20 per cent from the package of Premiership, Football League and Coca-Cola Cup football.

Thinking time . . . Sinclair reflects on his rapid climb to the top since leaving Blackpool's lights for the brighter ones of London PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Top Man a model of consistency

Martin Thorpe on Trevor Sinclair, the dreadlocked winger-turned-striker whose QPR form has propelled him into the England squad

TWO years ago, after Queens Park Rangers had finished fifth in the Premiership, Gerry Francis was praying he could keep all his players together for the following season. This being QPR there was little chance. He was told to sell Andy Sinton, and the England international went to Sheffield Wednesday for £2.75 million. Francis was given just £600,000 to spend on a replacement.

He drove a couple of hundred golden miles to Blackpool and signed a 20-year-old dreadlocked winger hardly anyone had heard of. On Wednesday Trevor Sinclair was called up for England.

It is as a central striker that Sinclair's career has taken off this season, his bulldog strength on the ball, appetite for running at defenders and indefatigable work-rate marking him out as that modern rarity: an English player to get excited about.

"His skill for a young man is phenomenal," said Nottingham Forest's Dutchman Bryan Roy after playing against him recently. "His vision and running off the ball make him a nightmare to pick up. He is something special."

Sinclair's two-year journey from the illuminations of Blackpool to the spotlight of England is not only a tribute to Francis's skills as a supreme spotter of talent but also to Sinclair's gift for being able to learn from what his father or his coaches told him along the way.

Which is not to say that Sinclair is a swot. Far from it. "He likes to enjoy himself and you've got to keep hold of him a little bit," says Francis. "Keep on top of him."

Sinclair likes to indulge in the sort of indoor pursuits one would expect of any normal 22-year-old Premiership footballer. "I have been modelling for Top Man, which is great fun. It pays well too," he says. And on a Saturday night he can be found dee-jaying The Spot nightclub in Covent Garden, "crashing out the garage music".

Born in Dulwich but brought up in Manchester, he shunned Manchester United as a schoolboy at Lilleshall to sign up with Blackpool. "I enjoyed it at United but the players there were the best in their age groups and you tended to get ingnored. So my father said I would get a better football education at somewhere like Blackpool, more attention and encouragement. And he was right."

His youth coach at Blackpool was Neil Bailey. "When I first saw him his ability was outstanding," he said. "You could see immediately he was a good player. He was in the first team at 16."

It was Bailey who encouraged the young Sinclair to take people on, though "we had to tell him about the other bits of his game, chasing back and getting into positions to get the ball. But he would run all day. His effort and commitment in games has always been there. He's never been one to shirk his responsibilites on the field.

"What's pleased me is that he's moved to the big stage and not stood still. He's been able to adapt his game and adjust to a new pace. So he must still be listening to people, which is a credit to him.

"You always knew that if he maintained the work he was doing he was going to go higher, and that is what he's done. He was always willing to work and listen and he's got the rewards."

And so will Blackpool. They are on 20 per cent of any future transfer fee and Sinclair is valued at up to £10 million. And there is another £50,000 coming their way when Sinclair actually plays for England, which he has a great chance of doing against Switzerland next week — the first dreadlocked player in the senior team.

Francis, who recently tried to sign his old protege for Tottenham, saw Sinclair's potential from the beginning. "I had watched him quite a few times over about six months at Blackpool and I see things in certain players. He had great ability, he could play through the middle or on the wing. He was a very powerful boy, good strength and pace, and you try and assess how you can make them better.

"At first he would put his head down and try to beat everybody. But he soon learned when to pass the ball and when to take people on. He learned things from playing with better players and he improved his fitness level, because with the ball skills he has the fitter you are the longer you can keep your concentration. And he took all that on board. Good coaching can only benefit anybody if the player can take it in."

Francis believes that QPR being QPR they will eventually sell Sinclair. Which means more fame and fortune. Francis offers his favourite Top Man model a few words of advice as the temptations beckon.

"Young people today in football earn a lot of money very quickly and can do a lot of things they never dreamed of before," he says. "Hopefully they are sensible enough to enjoy themselves but also know that in a few years you won't be playing football any more. And you don't want to look back and say you wasted an opportunity. When you've got the ability and opportunity Trevor's got, you mustn't waste it."

But both Bailey and Francis say he is a sensible lad. And Sinclair knows already what he wants to do when he meets the England squad: "I'm looking forward to hopefully learning a few things."

Listed to stop the teasing

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

DESPITE finally getting into the Queens Park Rangers first team, their central defender Steve Yates still wants a transfer. But it has nothing to do with money, or ambition or disenchantment. And the defender cannot find anything but good to say about his manager Ray Wilkins. Yates's reason puts a different accent on transfer requests.

The reason he wants to leave is because his wife Louise has quit a number of clerical jobs in the Surrey area after becoming upset with people taking the mickey out of her West Country accent.

"I don't like coming home and finding her in tears," says Yates in his own West Country burr. "I know it seems ridiculous but I can't play well knowing she is so upset. She's no yokel but you try telling some of her former workmates.

"I know it seems strange that I'm still on the list now I've got into the first team and I didn't want the truth to come out. But it's going to have to come out some time, I suppose. Maybe if we move up north her accent won't seem so different." Honestly, this story is true.

HEARTS have got the Italian player Pasquale Bruno on trial with a view to signing him. But the Scots should not count on it. Today newspaper, July 20, 1995: "Luton have signed Pasquale Bruno." The Times, January 7, 1995: "Pasquale Bruno, of Fiorentina but about to rejoin Lecce, has had trials with Manchester City and Crystal Palace." The People, October 16, 1994: "Pasquale Bruno is ready to turn his back on big money to play for Crystal Palace." The People, Sept 4. 1994: "Fiorentina have been in touch with Chelsea. Stoke and Portsmouth about selling Pasquale Bruno." The Guardian, February 25, 1993: "Pasquale Bruno confirmed he will join Manchester City next season."

WHAT GAP? The 50-name shortlist for the European Player of the Year contains just two English players — Wright and Shearer — and eight Italians.

SO IS Alan Shearer going to Newcastle? Sir John Hall's son was in Langans restaurant in London recently when in walked Kenny Dalglish, Blackburn's director of football. After Kenny was settled at his table, Hall Jnr passed him a note which read: "Subject to contract, Newcastle United bid £10 million for Alan Shearer." Back came a note from Dalglish: "Get in touch again when you're sober."

TALKING of Newcastle, the players there will pick up £70,000 each if they win the title. And United's directors have taken out insurance to cover the cost. They were going to do what they usually do, pay for it with a bet: last season they backed themselves to the tune of £125,000 at 8-1. But this season they could get only 5-1. "It was cheaper to take out insurance than to take out a bet at those odds," said the vice-chairman Freddie Shepherd. They are now 4-6.

THE Scotland manager Craig Brown was speaking at a lunch in Dundee last week when he noticed the Dundee United manager Billy Kirkwood and his assistant Maurice Malpas in the audience. "I hear," he ad-libbed in his speech, "that Dundee United have approached Duncan Ferguson in prison with a £4 million bid to bring him back to the club. But Duncan says he prefers it where he is."

APPARENTLY police have found the solid bronze football taken from Jackie Milburn's statue: Vinnie Jones had been using it for heading practice.

DEAD UNLUCKY: an Italian amateur player has been given a one-match ban — nine days after he was shot dead outside a bar in southern Italy. Luigi Coluccio, 23, had been sent off on October 29 playing for Gioiosa Jonica and, say officials, the posthumous ban was unavoidable as the ref submitted his report before the shooting.

Graham expects to be in demand

GEORGE GRAHAM, far from fearing being branded an untouchable, is confident he will be "head-hunted" early next year by big clubs desperate for success, writes Russell Thomas.

The disgraced Arsenal manager was yesterday unbowed in the face of the detailed and damning reasons from the FA behind its decision to ban him for a year over bung allegations.

Indeed Graham, who has always claimed payments totalling £425,000 were unsolicited gifts from the controversial Norwegian agent Rune Hauge, took another sideswipe at the FA and its commission's verdict of misconduct. "I don't think the FA have got a tremendous track record of getting everything right," he said. "They certainly didn't get it right with me."

Graham, speaking on GMTV, believes his track record — and the big clubs' need for trophies — will outweigh his tarnished reputation and usher him back into a managerial job once his ban expires in July. "I think as soon as this is all over, round about January or February, they will be out head-hunting me for future jobs — probably both here in the UK and also abroad.

"If a big club is not having a good time I think they will be after my services after seeing my CV."

Manchester City's Terry Phelan will sign for Chelsea today for £750,000. The move was threatened when the full-back demanded payment for the remainder of his two-year contract with City but the differences have now been settled and he flies to Stamford Bridge to complete the deal this morning.

The Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear yesterday scoffed at a claim by his Birmingham counterpart Barry Fry that a £1 million offer, plus Andy Clarke, for the Midlands club's defender Liam Daish had been turned down.

"I have not made any offer and have not spoken to anyone at Birmingham," said Kinnear. "I would expect all 72 of Barry's players for £2 million."

Scottish preview

Rangers fog lifts

Patrick Glenn

THE black smoke from the flak flying around Ibrox recently has obscured the fact that Rangers have made their most productive start to a championship in the 30-year history of the Premier Division.

They go into the home match against Aberdeen six points ahead of Celtic and 12 clear of this afternoon's challengers. If not a cure, that is at least a powerful palliative against the discomfort they have suffered in recent encounters with Juventus in the Champions' League and Aberdeen in the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final.

The league seems to bring the old Ibrox grinding mechanism to life, allowing them to gather victories and points while not at their best. Even the assistant manager Archie Knox agreed a need to "keep digging out results until we have our injured players back." Knox acknowledged that in two previous meetings with Aberdeen his team had not impressed.

The internationals Andy Goram and Brian Laudrup are among Rangers' most notable absentees today, although both may be available for next Sunday's meeting with Celtic at Ibrox.

Stuart McCall, who missed Wednesday's 2-0 win at Kilmarnock, is in the squad this afternoon while the Aberdeen manager Roy Aitken is concerned by injuries to the striker Scott Booth and the midfielder Stephen Glass.

If Celtic are to remain within catching distance of the leaders they will have to be more ruthless against Partick Thistle today than they were against Raith Rovers in Wednesday's 0-0 draw.

Platt defends Shearer as lone striker

David Lacey at Bisham with the England squad to play Switzerland on Wednesday

DON REVIE, when he was England manager, did not like the idea of players sitting around with nothing to do. He had the squad playing carpet golf and bingo to occupy their time. Only in matches did Revie's team play charades.

Terry Venables, despite inventing a football board game, has not yet followed suit, which is a pity because at Bisham Abbey yesterday his squad indulged in an impromptu round of spot-the-scorer. It might catch on, although a mahjong revival would be more likely should Wednesday's friendly against Switzerland at Wembley produce a third successive goalless draw.

At least the last player to score for England, Graeme Le Saux, the Blackburn defender whose beautifully struck volley alleviated the 3-1 Umbro Cup defeat by Brazil in June, was back.

Needless to say, Les Ferdinand — the most likely alternative to Shearer, without an international goal for 14 months — missed the training session.

Perhaps this is being unkind to Ferdinand, who has been carrying a groin problem at Newcastle. But since running a one-paced Dutch defence ragged in a World Cup qualifier at Wembley three seasons ago he has tended to be a groin strain waiting to happen where England are concerned.

Even if Ferdinand is fit, it is by no means certain that he will appear in Wednesday's match. He was recalled to the squad for the Norway game but did not even get on the bench. Yet with Peter Beardsley, another absentee in Oslo, due to return for the injured Nick Barmby and Robert Lee in particularly good form just now, the chance to field a Newcastle triumvirate against Switzerland is hard to ignore.

Much is going to depend on what view Venables takes of his captain, David Platt, who has yet to play for England this season because of a cartilage operation. To date Platt has scored 26 times for England in 55 appearances. In the present squad Beardsley comes a distant second with nine in 57.

Yesterday Platt brought some common sense to the debate about Shearer's much misunderstood lone attacking brief under Venables. "Why should you feel sorry for Alan?" asked Platt. "He's spoken to the gaffer, he knows what the situation is and he's fully behind it.

"I can't understand why people say he's always played up front at Blackburn with another striker. He hasn't. Blackburn won the championship with Chris Sutton coming in behind him. I think Alan realises that it is very, very difficult sometimes to play up there with just two in a line because then both strikers have got similar problems. Sometimes you've got to play one up."

Platt, with his Italian league experience, believes that this will work provided the rest of the team knows what it is about. "We've got to learn that, when we do get the ball, we should keep it and go forward as a team," he said.

"Sometimes we play one long ball and then we've got 40 or 50 yards to make up. With the best will in the world it's asking a great deal of somebody to get up there and support people. Because it's not just a matter of players not getting there quickly enough, it's the ball getting up there too quickly. The Italians are more patient. They'll weigh up the percentages."

Wembley may be less patient on Wednesday about weighing up the percentages if England have not scored after half an hour. A lot depends on Paul Gascoigne coming unscathed through Rangers' encounter with Aberdeen this afternoon.

Uefa completes its sums and the Swiss have qualified

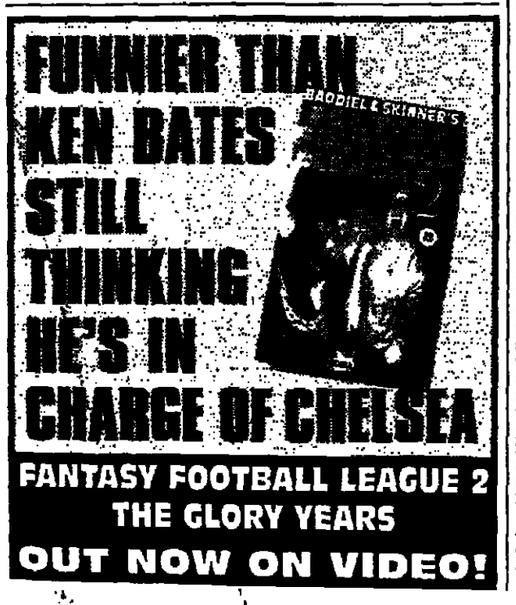
NEXT week's Wembley friendly against Switzerland assumed added significance yesterday when Uefa finally confirmed, definitively and only one month late, that the Swiss have really qualified for the European Championship, writes Chris Curtain.

There are eight qualifying groups and so, with the English hosts simply insisting on a berth, there is room for only seven runners-up in the final 16.

But such was (and is) the diabolical if-A-then-B-unless-not-C arithmetic of working out which one prospective runner-up would miss out, that not even Uefa would declare Switzerland in after they beat Hungary 3-0 on October 11.

Yesterday Uefa finally finished its sums. "Mathematically, yes, Switzerland have qualified," its spokesman Salvatore Cuccu confirmed. "But it is a complicated calculation."

Now they tell us.



A N Other

WHEN he was 16 the football world lay at this youngster's feet. His talent seemed boundless but his body argued otherwise. Nearly a quarter of a century later his infrequent appearances reaffirmed the skills that had added an historic digit to a football statistic and had eventually taken an echo of Drake to the home of Columbus. He helped a set of red woods to win two champions' trophies but, typically, he missed the second triumph through an injury which cost his country dear that year.

Last week: Jim Cumbes (Tranmere Rovers, West Bromwich Albion, Aston Villa, Portland Timbers, Southport).

Performance of the week: Neil Emblen (Wolves), whose all-round strength in the Coca-Cola Cup win at Charlton helped ease the pressure on Graham Taylor.

TEAM SHEET

Derby v West Brom

A Derby shake-up is likely after the 5-1 defeat at Tranmere. The striker Dean Sturridge is set to return while Lee Carsley may be drafted in at right-back. The centre-back Igor Stimac makes his home bow after scoring on his debut at Tranmere.

Grimsby v Barnsley

Ivano Bonetti returns to the Grimsby squad after a trip to California. The Dutch defender Arjan De Zeeuw impressed on his debut in the win over Wolves and Barnsley hope he will do it again.

Leicester v Watford

Watford give a fitness test to the centre-back Colin Foster (knee) while Leicester's Australian goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac has been dropped after a disastrous debut against Bolton.

Luton v Oldham

Luton may give a home debut to Darren Patterson, the Northern Ireland defender dogged by tendinitis since his transfer from Crystal Palace. The young defender Carl Serrant is in Oldham's squad.

Millwall v Ipswich

The Lions are likely to have the full-back Ben Thatcher and the striker Kerry Dixon in their starting line-up. Ipswich have signed the Luton goalkeeper Fred Barber on loan and he goes straight into the squad.

Norwich v Crystal Palace

Norwich hope their captain Jon Newsome will return after a back injury in place of Rob Newman. Mark Bowen, fit again after missing two matches, may replace Mike Milligan in midfield. Milligan has been told not to play by the Republic of Ireland's Jack Charlton. Ray Houghton — Republic of Ireland duty — and the Palace left-back Dean Gordon are missing.

Port Vale v Sheffield United

The Canadian international captain Randy Samuel is unlikely to make his full debut despite the fact that Vale's Gareth Griffiths, Dean Glover, Allen Tankard and Bradley Sandeman all face late tests. Simon Tracey, back from loan at Wimbledon, deputises for the Blades' Republic of Ireland goalkeeper Alan Kelly.

Portsmouth v Huddersfield

Portsmouth will be without the Republic of Ireland midfielder Alan McLoughlin and the suspended defenders Guy Butters and Mark Stimson. Jon Gittens is back after illness and Adrian Whitbread makes his debut after signing from West Ham on a month's loan.

Reading v Birmingham

The on-loan goalkeeper Chris Woods returns in place of Simon Sheppard but Reading's player-manager Jimmy Quinn has been asked not to play by Northern Ireland, so Lee Nogan and Stuart Lovell continue in attack. Birmingham again lack the suspended full-back Gary Cooper.

Southend v Stoke

Southend are waiting for a late fitness test on Mike Marsh's injured knee; Steve Tilson is his likely deputy. Stoke's centre-back Ian Cranson returns after a summer operation on a cruciate ligament injury in place of the suspended Ian Cranson and Larus Sigurdsson switches to right-back.

TOMORROW

Wolves v Charlton

Steve Bull will substitute again as Wolves retain Don Goodman as the lone striker. Charlton have doubts over the full-back Jamie Stuart (hamstring) and Shaun Newton (thigh strain) while the goalkeeper Mike Salmon who also has a thigh strain, is ruled out.

Motor Racing

Alan Henry reports from Adelaide on a shocking interruption to the Australian Grand Prix's first qualifying session

Hakkinen 'stable' after crash

Desperate moments . . . Mika Hakkinen is lifted from his McLaren-Mercedes after the accident PHOTOGRAPH: PASCAL RONDEAU

MIKA Hakkinen was in intensive care yesterday with serious head injuries sustained in a high-speed accident during qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix.

The 27-year-old Finn lost control of his McLaren-Mercedes when its left rear tyre punctured only three laps into the first qualifying session as he was approaching the 110mph fourth-gear right-hander leading on to the back straight of the Adelaide circuit. The McLaren snapped wildly out of control, vaulting the kerb and slamming sideways into the tyre barrier alongside the outside retaining wall.

Doctors and marshals took more 20 minutes extricating Hakkinen from his car and a tracheotomy was performed at the trackside to assist his breathing before he was taken by ambulance to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, where he is being kept in a medically induced coma.

Hakkinen's condition is serious but stable, according to a statement from the hospital signed by Dr Syd Watkins, the Fia medical delegate who is also one of the world's leading neurosurgeons.

Hakkinen . . . intensive care

"He is in the intensive care unit under sedation and ventilation — the normal management for head injuries," continued the communique. "Scans and X-ray investigations show no evidence of other serious injuries. While the neurological situation will be unpredictable for the next few days, progress so far is satisfactory."

The accident was almost a carbon copy of that which befell Karl Wendlinger in practice for last year's Monaco Grand Prix. The Austrian Sauber driver lingered in a coma for 19 days after slamming sideways into a retaining barrier and, although he returned to the cockpit, has conspicuously failed to regain his form.

McLaren's team chief Ron Dennis said that after having studied computer data from the crash and inspecting the car, he believed that the loss of tyre pressure almost certainly was caused by Hakkinen running over some debris on the Adelaide track.

Cut left rear tyres were also sustained by Johnny Herbert's Benetton, which slid into a retaining wall shortly after the session was restarted, and Pedro Lamy's Minardi.

"There seems to be something out there that is causing this tyre damage," said Tony Shakespeare, the Goodyear Formula One racing manager. "I suspect it was not debris in the normal sense but perhaps something amiss with one of the kerbs."

Charlie Whiting, the Fia technical delegate, confirmed that the regular F1 protocol whereby the track surface is checked before each practice session had been rigorously adhered to.

Nigel Mansell's 1986 world championship prospects disappeared in a shower of flailing rubber when he too suffered a tyre failure on this circuit in the Australian GP.

Hakkinen's accident represents the first serious injury sustained by any F1 driver in the 11-year history of the Australian GP at Adelaide, and it could well be the last. The fixture switches to the Albert Park circuit in Melbourne at the beginning of next season.

Drivers were yesterday calling for at least a double row of protective tyres to be installed before today's second qualifying session.

"It always seems obvious after the event but we've been working hard with the Fia on circuit safety and just have to keep on in that vein," said Damon Hill, who qualified his Williams in provisional pole position once the session was restarted. "In this instance it seems fairly clear that more tyres would have contributed to making the accident less severe.

"I usually go round the circuit each time [before practice], but this time I didn't. I don't blame anyone for this. But I've seen a lot of cars go off the track at that point and they usually stop before they hit the barrier."

Hill, pleased with the handling of his Williams FW17, was hopeful of ending his recent run of disappointments tomorrow.

David Coulthard, at Adelaide for the first time, was a tenth of a second slower; Gerhard Berger recorded the third fastest time ahead of Michael Schumacher's Benetton and Rubens Barrichello's Jordan-Peugeot.

Seventh to 11th places yesterday embraced a quartet of Britons: Eddie Irvine's Jordan, Herbert's Benetton, Hakkinen's team-mate Mark Blundell in the second McLaren-Mercedes and Martin Brundle's Ligier.

The British Formula Three champion Oliver Gavin will not make his F1 debut with the Pacific team here because he did not present the requisite super-licence to race officials in time.

Golf

Swedes still living in hope

David Davies in Shenzhen

ON THE face of it the last two rounds of the 41st World Cup, sponsored by Heineken, at the Mission Hills golf club here in China, are a two-rickshaw race.

The United States, as usual, lead, and with a 19-under-par total of 269 are four ahead of Sweden. Then come Mexico, six behind the Swedes, followed by Japan who, at eight-under, are 11 behind the leaders.

But this two-man team format means that appearances can be deceptive. While few would bet against the Americans going on to make this their 21st win in the history of the event, their failure remains at least a possibility. The margins can change dramatically on a single hole and yesterday one of the Swedes, Jesper Parnevik, said that the severity of the last two meant that even a five-stroke lead could disappear in that time.

He and Jarmo Sandelin have to be optimistic, knowing that they are up against a partnership in the finest US tradition. If they win again they will have equalled the record of four titles, established by Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer, and become the first team to do that successively.

Moreover they will have done it with some high-class golf. When Fred Couples birdied the first yesterday it took him and Davis Love III to exactly 100 under par since they teamed up for the first time at La Moraleja in Madrid in 1992. They finished at 107 under, an average of 7.64 birdies per team round.

Sweden, second overnight three behind, were quickly into hanging-on mode. Sandelin dropped shots at the 2nd and 4th and then hit his second shot to the long 6th 40 metres through the green. Parnevik, astonished by that, was poleaxed by what happened next. "He had a simple little chip," said the Swede, "and the next thing I see him take a full swing, cold top the ball miles through the green, leaving him with a full wedge shot back." Fortunately for Sandelin's health he hit his fourth to within a foot of the hole and got his par.

After that the Swedes settled down and both players went on to have eagles. Sandelin's came at the long 11th, with a six-foot putt, and Parnevik's at the short 15th, where he holed a five-iron in one.

It was a perfect shot and had hardly left the club before Couples was saying: "It's in, it's going in." It did too, pitching some 20 feet short, bouncing twice and then rolling at dead weight towards the hole. It dropped in with its last roll and the Swedes began high-fiving back on the tee.

Parnevik, who hardly drinks, was rewarded with free Heineken for a year, amounting to 1,248 cans.

That hole illustrated why this particular format gives hope to those who trail. Couples took four, three-putting from the fringe. Love took three and there and then Sweden picked up three shots on their opponents. It took them to two shots behind the Americans but Parnevik was to squander two shots to par on the closing holes.

Ireland are the leading home team and had not Philip Walton done the same as Parnevik they would have been joint third with Mexico. Scotland's Andrew Coltart missed seven putts of under 15 feet on the front nine and his partner Sam Torrance missed from two feet at the 12th and at six under they are too far back for hope. England, at four under, are even worse.

Sport in brief

Chess

Michael Adams took the lead over Joel Lautier with a smooth 38-move win but was knocked out in the opening round of the $50,000 Intel Grand Prix in Paris when he blundered a pawn in a speed chess play-off, *writes Leonard Barden.*

Etienne Bacrot, the youngest ever Grand Prix finalist, put up stiff resistance against the world No. 6 Vladimir Kramnik. The French 12-year-old drew their first game and lost the second only in the dying seconds when he came under intense time pressure.

Cricket

The former England pace bowler Paul Allott underwent an emergency operation at Bangor Hospital yesterday to save the sight of his left eye after a 1½-inch fish hook embedded in it while he was fishing with his children in north Wales.

Squash

Harris in final cut

Richard Jago in Nicosia

DEL HARRIS became only the second British man after Peter Marshall to reach the final of the World Open when he beat a second Australian in succession here yesterday.

The former world junior champion, who only two seasons ago was obliged to qualify for major tournaments because he had slipped so far in the world rankings, enjoyed the finest moment of his career by winning 10–15, 15–13, 15–4, 15–8 against Craig Rowland. The night before Harris, 26, had brought down the second-seeded Rodney Eyles.

Rowland, an unseeded semi-finalist and the tournament's surprise package, again showed his great improvement. He looked more than good enough to reach the final when he took the first game and made a dangerous recovery in the second from 5–10 to 10–11, then from 10–14 to 13–14.

"I felt sluggish after the match with Eyles and I didn't have so much power in my legs," said Harris. "I was a bit worried at one stage in the second game."

He picked up his game by trying to improve his length and did better against Rowland when he forced his opponent deep.

Rowland's movement deteriorated and Harris built a useful lead. At 8–4 in the third a long rally seemed to damage the Australian and after it Harris took 13 points in a row. "I feel very, very pleased and it makes all the work of the past two years so worthwhile," Harris said.

He will have his greatest test in today's final when he plays the holder from Pakistan, Jansher Khan, who is attempting to win his seventh title. In his semi-final Jansher beat another Australian, Anthony Hill, 17–15, 15–12, 15–6.

Hockey

Britain get ready to repel Argentina at the double

Pat Rowley

GREAT Britain's men will play an additional two internationals in their build-up for the Olympic qualifying tournament in January.

Argentina have confirmed they will visit England this month and will play Britain in Reading on November 23 and in Hounslow two days later.

David Whittle, the British manager, said his side would use the matches for selection purposes and field two completely different teams. Britain's squad has been increased to 29 now that Soma Singh and David Luckes are fit.

Phil McGuire, the one player still to prove his fitness, was due to have a test last night and could be on the bench today for the First Division game between Teddington and Old Loughtonians.

This proved a decisive encounter last season when Teddington won 3–0 in late February and went on to take the league title while Loughtonians, the then leaders, fell away to finish seventh.

Loughtonians have the opportunity to overtake Reading at the top, if only temporarily, as Teddington, who may be without Simon Nicklin, have been shipping a lot of goals. A high-scoring game can be anticipated.

Reading face a major test with Guildford's visit tomorrow. If Reading lose and Loughtonians fail to win, Cannock or Southgate, who are both home to inconsistent sides, could go top. Cannock meet Canterbury, whom they have not beaten for two years; Southgate play Gymkhana.

In the women's National League Sutton visit Clifton today, the team they deposed at the top of the table last week, while second-placed Hightown go to Ipswich.

Of the top four only Slough who, like Sutton, have three players away in Cape Town with Britain, can be confident of winning. They visit a Bracknell side with only one point to their name.

Results

Soccer

EUROPEAN U-21 CHAMPIONSHIP: Group Three: Hungary 3, Iceland 1. **Group Four:** Italy 2, Ukraine 1.

Rugby Union

REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: Wales Emerging U-21 8, NZ Rugby News U-21 28. **CLUBS:** Abertillery 3, Cross Keys 18; Kenfig Hill 12, Neath 53.

Golf

WORLD CUP (Shenzhen, China): **Second round: 269** United States (D Love III 65, 67, F Couples 68, 69). **273** Sweden (J Parnevik 67, 66; J Sandelin 69, 71). **279** Mexico (E Toledo 70, 67; R Alarcon 72, 70). **280** Japan (H Sasaki 62, 69; H Goda 77, 72). **281** Ireland (D Clarke 68, 69; P Walton 73, 71). **282** France (J Van de Velde 69, 72, J-L Guepy 72, 69); Scotland (S Torrance 68, 70; A Coltart 70, 74); Australia (R Allenby 68, 73; B Ogle 70, 71). **283** New Zealand (M Campbell 68, 71; F Nobilo 73, 70). **284** South Africa (R Goosen 71, 66; H Buhrmann 74, 73); England (M Roe 68, 69; P Broadhurst 73, 74). **285** Italy (C Rocca 70, 65; S Grappasonni 72, 75); Wales (M Mouland 68, 74; P Price 73, 70). **286** Spain (S Luna 66, 71; I Garrido 74, 75). **287** Germany (A Cejka 71, 70; S Struver 73, 73). **288** Netherlands (J Steenkamer 70, 70; R Muntz 73, 75); Canada (R Gibson 67, 73; J Rutledge 72, 76); Zimbabwe (T Johnstone 67, 78, M McNulty 71, 72). **289** Finland (A Kankkonen 72, 71; K Vainola 76, 70); Switzerland (A Bossert 71, 73; P Quirici 73, 72); Paraguay (G N Cabrera 70, 74; M Ruiz 74, 71). **291** Philippines (F Minoza 71, 74; R Paciolerin 72, 74). **292** Malaysia (M Ramayah 70, 76; A Kadir 70, 76). **293** Thailand (T Srirot 70, 67; U Duangdecha 80, 76); Denmark (A Sorensen 73, 74; S Tinning 75, 71). **294** South Korea (Choi Sang-ho 71, 72; Choi Kwang-soo 78, 73); Colombia (A Romero 73, 72; Jesus Amaya 76, 73). **295** Argentina (E Romero 67, 76; G Monasterio 75, 77). **299** China (Zhang Lianwei 76, 74; Cheng Jun 76, 74). **300** Sri Lanka (N Perera 77, 71; K Chandradasa 78, 74); Venezuela (E Miartuz 76, 74; H Lavie 78, 72). **316** Peru (L F Graf 74, 77; N Quispe 84, 81).

TAIHEIYO MASTERS (Tokyo): **Second round** (Japanese unless stated): **136** S Higashi 70, 66. **139** H Kase 70, 69. **141** T Watanabe 73, 68; T Suzuki 68, 73. **142** R Gamez (US) 76, 66; M Ozaki 73, 69; T Odate 73, 69; S Maruyama 70, 72. **143** T Ozaki 76, 67; C Montgomerie (GB) 74, 69; H Meshiai 72, 71; S Ginn (Aus) 72, 71. **Also: 144** P Senior (Aus) 73, 71. **145** G Norman (Aus) 74, 71; B Lane (GB) 71, 74.

HASSAN TROPHY (Royal Dar Es Salam): **Second round** (GB unless stated): **140** N Price (Zim) 69, 71. **143** C Cevaer (Fr) 73, 70. **144** R Chapman 71, 73; D J Russell 70, 74; W Westner (SA) 69, 75. **145** S Rintoul (US) 71, 74; D Hammond (US) 71, 74. **145** J M Canizares (Sp) 70, 76; M Gronberg (Swe) 73, 73; F Langham (US) 73, 73; M Brisky (US) 73, 73.

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S OPEN (Melbourne): **Second round** (Aus unless stated): **141** L Neumann (Swe) 67, 74. **142** J Geddes (US) 68, 74. **145** A Sorenstam (Swe) 70, 75; R Hetherington 74, 71; R Walton (US) 74, 71. **146** C Nilsmark (Swe) 74, 72. **147** K Webb 73, 74, P Rizzo (US) 75, 72. **148** D Reid (GB) 73, 75; C Hall (GB) 69, 79; J Crafter 76, 72; L Lambert 70, 78; A Nicholas (GB) 76, 72.

Tennis

KREMLIN CUP (Moscow): **Quarter-finals:** C-U Steeb (Ger) bt A Olkhovsky (Rus) 6–1, 7–6; D Vacek (Cz) bt A Volkov (Rus) 6–2, 6–3; Y Kafelnikov (Rus) bt B Black (Zim) 6–7, 6–0, 6–0; M Rosset (Switz) bt S Draper (Aus) 6–4, 6–2.

STOCKHOLM OPEN: Quarter-finals: D Prinosil (Ger) bt J Courier (US) 6–3, 7–6; A Boetsch (Fr) bt M Tillstrom (Swe) 7–5, 6–4.

ATP CHALLENGER (Beijing): **Quarter-final:** T Henman (GB) bt S Ladipo (Nig) 6–4, 6–2.

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP (Katrineholm, Swe): **First Division (White Group):** Slovakia bt Britain 2–1 (H Nagyova bt C Wood 7–5, 7–6; D Szabova bt S Smith 6–4, 6–4; Szabova/M Nedelkova lost to Wood/V Lake 1–6, 0–6). Sweden bt Latvia 2–1.

Basketball

NBA: Cleveland 88, Chicago 106; New York 103, Indiana 95; Dallas 104, Milwaukee 94; Golden State 121, Atlanta 125.

Chess

INTEL GRAND PRIX (Paris): **Round One:** J Lautier (Fr) bt M Adams (Eng) 2–1; V Korchnoi (Switz) bt V Arbakov (Rus) 2–1; V Kramnik (Rus) bt E Bacrot (Fr) 1½–½; V Ivanchuk (Ukr) bt A Vaisser (Fr) 2–0.

Cricket

CASTLE CUP (first day of four): **Johannesburg:** Transvaal 356–7 (M Rushmere 133, B White 85, K Rutherford 51) v Border. **Bloemfontein:** Northern Transvaal 259 (M Davis 71; Stephenson 4–58). Free State 5–1. **Paarl:** Boland 177–4 (A Kuiper 74no, K Jackson 69) v Natal. **Cape Town:** Eastern Province 234 (D Callaghan 58; Simons 4–38, Martyn 4–68). Western Province 31–0.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Boston 4, Ottawa 3; Florida 2, Edmonton 1; Philadelphia 3, Calgary 1; Chicago 5, Vancouver 2; Colorado 1, Dallas 1 (ot).

Motor Racing

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX (Adelaide): **Leading provisional first qualifying times:** 1, D Hill (GB) Williams 1min 15.505sec; 2, D Coulthard (GB) Williams 1.15.828; 3, M Schumacher (Ger) Benetton 1.16.039; 4, R Barrichello (Br) Jordan 1.16.725; 5, H-H Frentzen (Ger) Sauber 1.16.837; 6, E Irvine (GB) Jordan 1.17.197; 7, J Herbert (GB) Benetton 1.17.289; 8, M Blundell (GB) McLaren 1.17.348; 9, M Brundle (GB) Ligier 1.17.788; 10, O Panis (Fr) Ligier 1.18.033; 11, O Panis (Fr) Ligier 1.18.033; 12, M Salo (Fin) Tyrrell 1.18.604; 13, G Morbidelli (It) Footwork 1.18.814.

Squash

DETJEN WORLD OPEN (Nicosia): **Semi-finals:** J Khan (Pak) bt A Hill (Aus) 15–7, 15–12, 15–6; D Harris (Eng) bt C Rowland (Aus) 10–15, 15–13, 15–4, 15–8.

DETJEN WOMEN'S GRAND PRIX (Nicosia): **Semi-finals:** M Martin (Aus) bt C Jackman (Eng) 3–9, 9–0, 9–3, 9–10, 9–2; S FitzGerald (Aus) bt L Irving (Aus) 9–7, 9–1, 9–0.

Attention: Managers of the bottom three clubs. Our latest mortgage deal protects your home even if you lose your job.*

For more information call 0800 400 999.

NatWest
More than just a bank

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

MOTOR RACING: Mika Hakkinen in a coma after crashing in practice for the Adelaide Grand Prix, page 11

SportsGuardian

ENTER THE NEW SHANE WARNE

Tour match: South Africa A v England XI

Rubber man has England in a twist

Edward Harris in Kimberley

PAUL ADAMS is one of those names that will go down in the long list of humiliations for touring England sides.

Yesterday the 5ft 4in 18-year-old with a bowling action that defies medical as well as cricket manuals turned England's final preparation for the first Test against South Africa next week into a shambles.

In only his second senior match Adams, a Cape Coloured from the same St Augustine's School that once produced Basil D'Oliveira, tormented England by taking three wickets for one run in 22 deliveries.

Alec Stewart, Graham Thorpe and Graeme Hick, all looking to polish up their batting before the big day, became victims of his left-arm wrist spin which promises to have the same effect on South African cricket as the leg-spinner Shane Warne has had on the game in Australia.

For England, facing South Africa A's formidable 470, it was the worst possible experience before the Test.

With Mark Ramprakash also giving away his wicket, they collapsed to 59 for four. Only Mike Atherton's in-bred defiance and Robin Smith's aggression stopped the rot as they took the total to 127 for four on the second day.

Adams's action has perplexed the South African coaches but he has known nothing different since he was nine and has been left to it.

At the moment of delivery he is not looking where the ball is going but down under his left arm pit with his back bent double as if he is about to go into a forward roll.

The result, however, is a wrist spinner's whipped delivery with surprising control.

He bowls a variety of tricks but his stock ball is the googly, which spins away from the right-hander and accounted for Stewart with his second ball.

Last weekend he was making his debut for Western Province and at the time the selectors were picking him for the A team he was winning the match against Transvaal with six for 101. When he arrived in Kimberley this shy almost monosyllabic young man had to be introduced to most of his team-mates, so little did they know about him.

The pitch was still batsman-friendly yesterday as Atherton and Stewart made a solid start. By the end of the 24th over they had posted 55 runs and the South African pace attack had looked as ineffective as England's had on the first day and a half.

Then Adams was summoned. Stewart padded away the first ball outside leg stump but, as he reached forward for the straighter second, it sped past his bat and hit off stump.

Thorpe, the left-hander, playing his first first-class innings since September, was out to the first ball of Adams's fourth over, pushing forward and giving a catch to silly point. Hick prodded a full toss back to the gleeful bowler four balls later and England were in disarray, the more so as Ramprakash had got himself out dabbing at a delivery from the medium-pacer Jacques Kallis to give a simple catch to the wicketkeeper.

After his early success Adams was allowed to bowl unchanged for the rest of the day. Smith, never at his most comfortable against spin and batting without a helmet or grille to protect a recently fractured cheekbone, played him as well as anyone, using his feet and attacking the bad ball. But he was fortunate to escape when he was dropped by the wicketkeeper on 18.

The only relief for England came with the news from the South African selectors last night that they will not be drafting Adams into their Test squad — just yet.

SOUTH AFRICA A
First innings (overnight: 325–5)

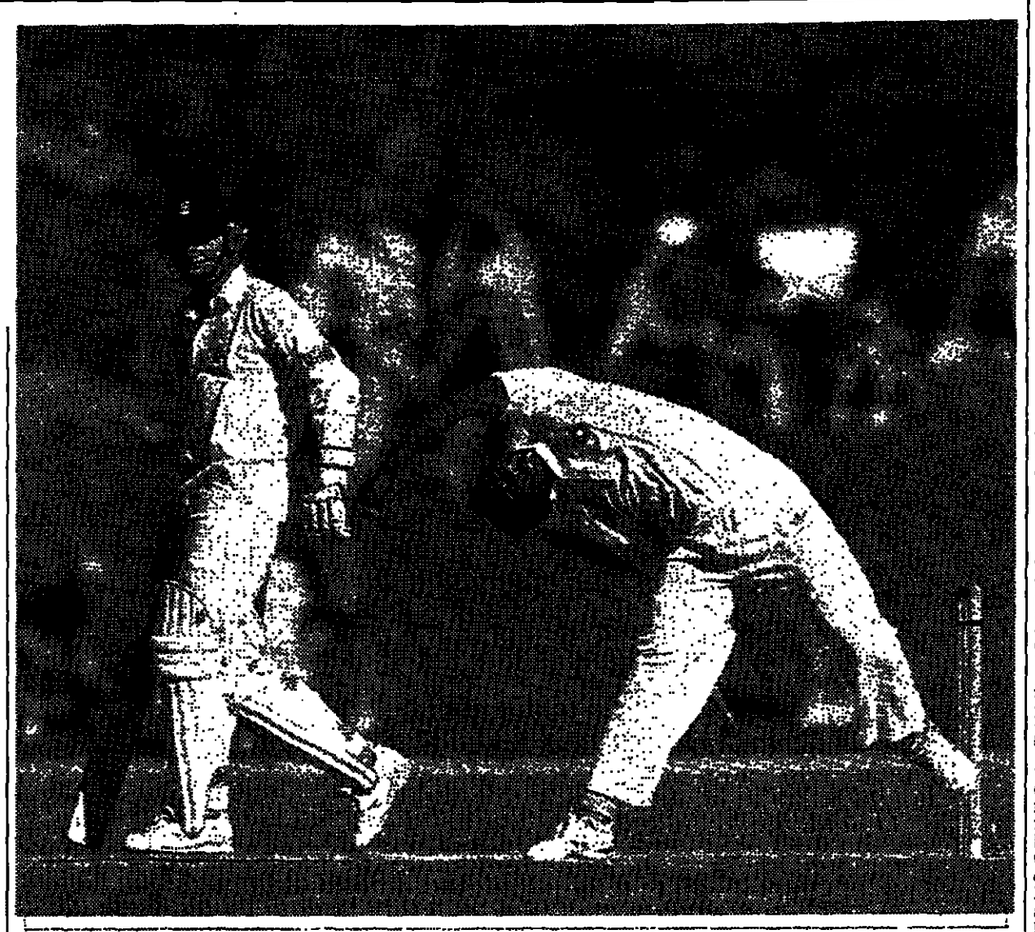
L Klusener lbw b Gough	61
†B J Pallaraman c Hick b Watkinson	30
N Boje c Stewart b Hick	22
S D Jack b Watkinson	44
R Telemachus *not out*	9
Extras (b16, lb5, w2, nb11)	33
Total (for 9 dec, 142 overs)	470

Fall of wickets: cont: 362, 395, 418, 470.
Did not bat: P Adams.
Bowling: Malcolm 22–3–88–1; Gough 29–6–85–3; Fraser 25–3–78–1; Watkinson 42–8–137–2; Thorpe 4–1–15–0; Hick 14–3–34–2; Ramprakash 6–1–11–0.

ENGLAND
First innings

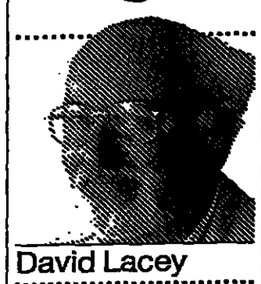
*M A Atherton not out	49
A J Stewart b Adams	34
M R Ramprakash c Pallaraman b Kallis	1
G P Thorpe c Klusener b Adams	1
G A Hick c & b Adams	0
R A Smith not out	31
Extras (b4, lb3, w4)	11
Total (for 4, 59 overs)	127

Fall of wickets: 55, 58, 59, 59.
To bat: †R C Russell, M Watkinson, D Gough, A R C Fraser, D E Malcolm.
Bowling: Jack 8–4–15–0; Telemachus 6–1–22–0; Klusener 11–1–30–0; Kallis 7–3–8–1; Adams 18–7–33–3; Boje 9–4–12–0
Umpires: D L Orchard and R E Koertzen.



Over the top . . . Mike Atherton watches warily as Paul Adams delivers extraordinarily PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM CHADWICK

Canvey Island the crunch as Brighton rock



David Lacey

SEASIDERS may like their football but their clubs have seldom thrived beside the sea. The thought occurs because, to someone weaned on the goals of Johnny McNichol and Peter Harburn, not to mention the derring-do dashes of Des Tennant and Frankie Howard, the idea of Brighton and Hove Albion perishing on Canvey Island in the FA Cup tomorrow twangs a particularly poignant chord just now.

The disturbing thing is not the thought of Albion going out to a non-league team. The novelty of that wore off in the mid-Seventies when, despite being managed by Brian Clough and then by his *alter ego* Peter Taylor, Brighton lost FA Cup ties at home to Walton and Hersham and Leatherhead in successive seasons.

At least Gordon Smith's famous miss of 1983 against Manchester United in Albion's one FA Cup final has preserved for the club a niche in Wembley folklore. The moment is better remembered than, for example, Steve MacKenzie's wonderful goal for Manchester City against Tottenham two years earlier.

In any case there would have been nothing special about seeing the FA Cup held aloft from a corporation open-topper, plenty of clubs having hired Brighton buses to do that. The town double-deckers always did see more of the Cup than the town team.

No, the worry is that, win or lose tomorrow, Brighton's FA Cup days may be numbered. After years of haggling over planning permission and more winding-up orders than a clockwork mouse, the Goldstone, Albion's home for 93 years, has been sold for redevelopment.

Time is pressing and Brighton still have nowhere else to go. Plans for ground-sharing with Crawley Town were turned down by the local council this week. The spectre of a temporary move to Portsmouth remains but Albion fans would not stand for it.

That good old standby, the adjacent Hove Greyhound Stadium, has been mentioned as a possibility. There was talk of this in the early Sixties but nothing happened apart from a few jokes about the club going to the dogs.

What is it about seaside clubs? So often their footballing fortunes, even in the good years, have the stability of sandcastles facing an incoming tide. At the moment Southend United, 14th in the Endsleigh First Division, are the highest-placed seaside resort in the English leagues.

Next come Blackpool and Bournemouth, fifth and 11th in the Second Division, where only Hull are keeping Brighton off the bottom. Scarborough are lying low in the Third but nobody is lower than Torquay, through whose defence herds of wildebeest are apt to roam.

THE great ports and shipyards may feature strongly among the league champions but there is no beach resort on the list. True, Blackpool were leading the First Division at the outbreak of the second world war and have been the only seaside town to make out a *prima facie* case for winning the title but for a long time now they have simply dredged along with their fellow seasiders. The great Cup days of Matthews and Mortensen are grainy memories.

Shifting populations, the emphasis on summer activities, a lack of substantial local capital and the fact that people who move to the coast tend not to want new football grounds on their back patios all argue against a seaside soccer revival. But, if the hard core of support remains, there is no reason why these clubs should be allowed to crumble away with the piers.

The sort of faith which recently persuaded a Southend fan to drive 2,000 miles to Italy and back in a Reliant Robin to see his team draw 1–1 with Reggiana in the Anglo-Italian Cup, a game watched by a crowd of 800, ought to fortify Brighton fans making their way across the Thames Estuary tomorrow.

Good old Sussex by the sea. Playing at Crawley was never really on. When seagulls fly inland it is usually a sign of bad weather.

Bates drops Harding off Bridge and into the drink

Martin Thorpe

HE ANSWERS the phone: "Alcoholics Anonymous." Matthew Harding sounds definitely bubbly despite having just landed from New York to find himself accused by Ken Bates of embarrassing boardroom behaviour "related to your heavy drinking" at games.

Harding laughs off the accusation and also Bates's new edict banning him from the Chelsea directors' box as just slings and arrows aimed at the takeover threat from Harding's outrageous fortune (41 and worth £125 million).

All is contained in a letter sent by the Chelsea chairman to Harding, and the press, which informs Harding that he is forthwith banned from the Stamford Bridge directors' box, executive areas, press lounge and players' bar. He has even had his carpark pass withdrawn. This is despite the fact that Harding owns Stamford Bridge and is a director of Chelsea FC.

"It is rather puzzling, isn't it," is all he will really say on the subject, preferring not to grace such tactics with a reply. Actually he had not seen the letter. The press got theirs first.

It all heightens the end of a dutiful friendship. For when Bates, the majority shareholder, invited Harding on board two years ago, he saw the multi-millionaire as his natural successor. Not any more. "Your hypocrisy was pretending to be a good friend and working together amicably while rubbishing me at every opportunity behind my back," writes Bates.

The letter informs Harding of his ban, and "the stewards will be instructed to refuse you entry". Bates then adds, tongue surely in bearded cheek: "It gives me no pleasure to do this . . ." before continuing, "It will at least stop the embarrassment in the boardroom of the behaviour related to your heavy drinking both home and away". As the pair have been slagging each other off all week, this provides a gloriously acidic finale to the seven days. Now take your seats, if you can, for the next instalment at Chelsea's home game with Bolton on November 22.

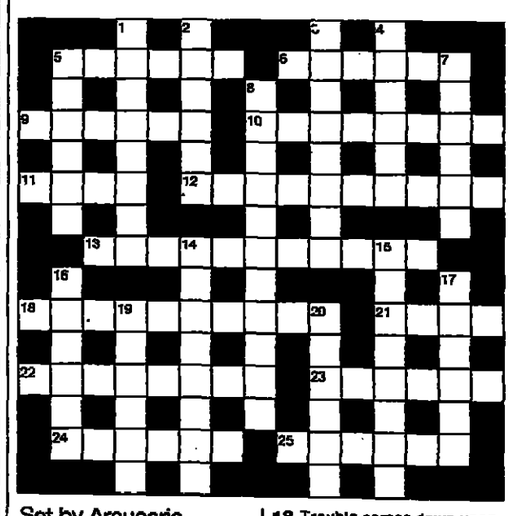
Other soccer, page 10

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,496

Indispensable to all crossword addicts! A copy of the brand new Collins Thesaurus, the ultimate browser's wordfinder will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,496, 6 Bushey Hall Road, Bushey, Herts., WD2 2EA, by first post on Friday, or by fax to 01923 225885. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday November 20.

Name .....

Address .....



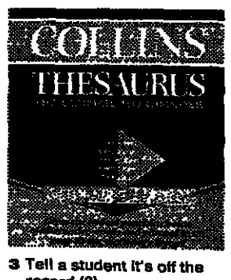
Set by Araucaria

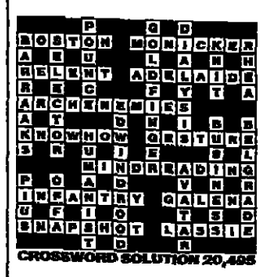
Across

5 Heavy fall: it couldn't be plainer (6)
6 Poles distil moisture from nap (6)
9 Ultra-feminine, not straightforward (6)
10 Measuring of distance round and round structure: go for it (8)
11,21 Justifiable arrest, by the Yard, of the last draft (4,4)
12 Letters to me and Mr. Turner from pathologist? (4-6)
13 Teacher and pupils flower in 1150 with fool (6,5)
18 Trouble comes down upon caricaturist (10)
21 See 11
22 Political correctness at meal with difference between knives and forks (5,3)
23 The motorists' opera (6)
24 Revolution in dress is wrong (6)
25 Some cooking for vegetable — outside could burn (6)

Down

1 Record for completion by one of two university types (3,5)
2 Water to drink going down from the throat (6)
3 Tell a student it's off the record (8)
4 Post Office user, possibly not the genuine article (6)
5 Song in pub in Coventry, perhaps (6)
7 Queen accepting composer's source of income (6)
8 Two scenes of war: situation in the second is something awful (11)
14 Belief about people in multiple housing (8)
15 Get rid of people when competitors are slow-moving (4,4)
16 Catch fabulous bird that eats everything up (6)
17 Noticed about some players of an organ (6)
19 Copper's destiny on the outside is destructive (6)
20 Centres of growth in clue construction (6)





CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,495

13
Saturday November 11
1995

The Guardian Outlook

In the year since the National Lottery was launched it has become a theatre of the burlesque, a conduit of mass escapism – a new religion even, says DAVID McKIE

Pray chance will smile on you

OUTSIDE the Baptist church at Hackney Downs, there's a notice which says: "God says righteousness makes a nation great. Sin is a disgrace to any nation." And another, more informal, which no one has yet got round to removing: "There *is* a cure for summertime blues . . " with a row of crosses. And just round the corner in Downs Park Road, next to the New Testament Church of God (Inc), is the Ebenezer Bible Institute, its door adorned with another message of hope of coming redemption: "*Spero Meliora* — I hope for better things."

But out on the main shopping street, there's a much more immediate hope of release from the grinding world on offer, and one which doesn't call for amendment of sinful lives. "Play here," says a poster advertising the National Lottery, "five scenic routes to £10,000." A couple of minutes away, past the Prize House amusement arcade and a branch of Ladbroke's, there's another lottery outlet: "Forget it all for an Instants," its billboard advises. Where the newsagents don't have the lottery they've always got something else. Evening Standard new £50,000 instant winner. Lucky Lotto. Scratch-'n' win (25p goes to charity). Even the off-licence is in on the act — "You could be looking at £25,000" — though in fact you couldn't, since the small print says the offer closed on February 28.

Spero Meliora . . . But for those behind the lottery, the outcome, in the year since the operation began, could scarcely have been more glorious. Ours, says Virginia Bottomley, is the most successful lottery in history. It has so far taken £3,256 million for the Saturday operation, plus £1,090 million for the instant cards which started in March. It has paid out £1,469 million to millions of happy punters, with 285 jackpot winners, 127 of them made into millionaires, and a biggest single pay-out of nearly £23 million in June. Over £1,065 million has gone to five chosen good causes, to which you can add 1,220 grant awards worth £375 million. (That's quite apart from the wonders it's done for Camelot.)

It's become an essential part of the nation's Saturday night. Theatres and cinemas suffered as the world began to tune in to Anthea Turner. Even eminent figures are hooked. "I buy a weekly ticket in a newsagent in my constituency," Sir Ivan Lawrence (C. Burton) told a Commons debate on the lottery on October 25. "There is always a queue for tickets. The people in that queue are always delighted to see me . . . People get fun out of the lottery, not just from watching the programme in the evening, but from putting their money in and winning a tenner here or there." Sir Ivan puts on a fiver a week. He has won eight times, netting some £80. It's cost him £140 to £150. Happy Sir Ivan! Like so many others, he's a loser who feels like a winner.

It's easy to get the habit. The form is a cinch to fill in, much simpler than the pools. The egalitarian streak in the English, now out of fashion in politics but still abundantly evident in everyday life, adds to the lure. Everybody starts equal. Your card has as good a chance as anyone else's, even the Duke of Westminster's. Critics of the enterprise sometimes question that claim: there are rumours that big pickings have gone to the rich, that big syndicates from as far away as Thailand and Hong Kong fish profitably in the pool, hidden behind Camelot's anonymity rules. But that's not how it is perceived. In Mrs Bottomley's lottery — unlike the wider lottery that is life — competitors are not boosted or handicapped by the accident of birth, by strong or feeble physique, by good looks or the lack of them. People who tell you that they must have been at the back of the queue when the brains were handed out have as good a chance of success as Stephen Hawking.

That makes success more acceptable. Many who rage at Cedric Brown for helping himself to the proceeds of gas privatisation show no resentment at all against those who grow rich though the lottery. Family and friends (especially the long lost friends who turn up on winners' doorsteps to offer congratulations and ask for a share for themselves) may persecute the successful, but people in pubs and clubs are generously philosophical. Good luck to them, they will say. It could have been me. Perhaps one day, it will be.

There's another dimension to add to the nation's fun. Just at the time when the royals seem to be flagging, the lottery has given the nation a whole new soap opera. There are some you celebrate with, and some you love to hate. A couple desperate to raise money to let their crippled daughter have conductive therapy. Tony in Mitcham, who lives with his pregnant girlfriend in one room of a terraced house and is in and out of menial jobs, but who plans to use his £10 million to care for his mum in Jamaica, to let his girlfriend live like a queen (probably in a castle) and who hopes to become Britain's first black country squire.

Or arrogant, strutting Lee Ryan, swiftly transferred after collecting his winnings to one of Her Majesty's jails for offences committed before his enrichment. Or "lottery rat" Mark Gardiner ("I hope he drinks himself to death with his money" — his mother), a man so vilified by his nearest and formerly dearest that the kindly old Sun had to advertise for someome to say a good word for him. The best soap scripts, as ever, are written by Life.

Then there's the distribution. You'll howl as millions go to the big fat cats of the Royal Opera House! You'll cheer as a shabby Scout hut gets a new roof! . . . Perhaps egalitarian instincts here make for conflict not contentment, but even the rows have been fun. And away from the big beneficiaries, there's been plenty here to contribute to what Arnold Bennett (I think) called the great cause of cheering us all up. What joy it must have brought to the Crouch End Clock Tower Centenary Celebration Committee; the Bingham Infants Self Help Group; Clanjamfrie Ltd, Glasgow; Cushendall Sailing and Boating Club; West Meon Village Hall!

But look closer, and it's rather less fair than it looks. "Some 47 per cent of our sample," says Paul Rickard, head of research at Mintel, of a survey he's just completed, "regularly buy one or two weekly draw tickets each week. Analysis of this category reveals a tendency towards the C2 and D social classes and also the elderly, and this group also has a high concentration of pensioners in its ranks . . . Some 21 per cent of families on a tight budget in the sample claim to be regularly buying between three and five tickets a week, indicating pockets of high spending amongst those who are potentially least able to afford it."

Some lottery outlets — there's one on the high street near Hackney Downs — are close to post office counters. People drawing benefit pass them while leaving the shop. *Spero Meliora*: many are tempted. If you live in a place like this, perhaps in one of the shabby tower blocks drawn up to the north of Hackney Downs park as if ready to move into battle, or the long lower block to the east of them, with its mean little windows, which wouldn't look out of place in Romania, you must surely ask: "Is this all? Does life have to be like this?" And you know from the television, the glossy ads, the family homes in sitcoms, the holiday programmes, that for many, it doesn't. For some, it's the Porsche on the drive, the dry Martinis under the bougainvillea out on the terrace. A little bit of luck on the lottery and that could be me, too.

The Nightingale Estate is part of the Hackney North constituency (10,000 Labour majority). Here are a few statistics. Of 569 constituencies in England and Wales on the redrawn boundaries, this one comes fourth on an index of overcrowding, sixth for its level of unemployment, seventh for its black population. For its rate of economic activity — that's to say, the proportion of people of working age who are available to work — it comes 511th. In

Continued on page 15

The top numbers... ...and the worst

WINNERS . . .

CAMELOT: the operator made £10.8 million in the first 20 weeks.

Mystic Meg, tabloid star-gazer, now a TV star with Saturday night forecasts.

Royal Opera House: a bumper £80 million.

The Churchill Family: £12.5 million for the Churchill archives, bought for the nation.

Sun journalist who changed his name by deed poll to Lenny Lottery and now enjoys a scoop a week.

LOSERS . . .

Factory Worker from Blackburn, who won nearly £18 million, was ostracised by his workmates and fled abroad

Gordon Kennedy: got his TV break co-hosting the draw but, outshone by Anthea Turner, was unceremonially cast back into obscurity.

Lee Ryan won £6.5 million in March — and was jailed for 18 months in September for handling stolen cars.

Bookies: Ladbrokes cut 200 jobs in August.

Charities estimate they will lose £339 million, while recouping £248 million in grants — a net deficit of £91 million.

Scratching at our souls

ALAN BLEASDALE (right): I have never gambled in my life, except with my health. My instinctive moral horror at the lottery is re-lived every Saturday in newsagents throughout the land as the worn-out, the elderly, the shabby and the desperate queue up in the hope of their only escape. Is this really all that there is on offer? I also know for a fact that every small charity myself and my friends are involved with has lost out. Don't expect me to believe that sufficient money still ends up where it should.
Alan Bleasdale is a playwright

JENNY DISKI (below): I have great respect for fantasy. But the best fantasies must have at least a remote chance of being fulfilled, so, at odds of 14 million to 1, I haven't bothered to buy a ticket.

Anyway, I've only just figured out how to use the pay and display parking machines. I'm hoping to come up trumps on one of them.
Jenny Diski is a novelist

JOAN BAKEWELL: The judgmental tone of the tabloids has deluded the public into regarding this as some sort of tax over which they have rights to decide how it is distributed. It isn't. It's a device to get the Government out of a spot caused by a shortage of money. Meanwhile the lottery's making lots of people happy. And I rejoice with the Royal Opera House and Sadlers Wells as much as I rejoice with Hayling Island Amateur Dramatic Society and West Mean Village Hall.
Joan Bakewell is a TV presenter

MAX CLIFFORD (right): I don't do the lottery. My father was a big gambler and as a result I have an insight into the world of winners and losers. I gamble every day of my professional life and so don't feel the need to take more risks.
Max Clifford is a public relations consultant

PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE: I am totally in favour. It seems to give the masses a lot of instant pleasure, without doing any harm. I suppose you could say it has replaced religion as the new opiate of the people.
Peregrine Worsthorne is a columnist on the Sunday Telegraph

MARK WALLINGER: I hate the lottery because it is a tax on the poor and gullible. I hate it because it is a further centralisation of power to unelected quangos. I hate Camelot, the most charmless company ever created. Giving money to Eton and the Churchills is an obscenity. And most of all I hate it because I've lost 14 quid on the bastard thing.
Mark Wallinger is an artist

A hateful regime

NIGERIA must be expelled forthwith from the Commonwealth and subjected to immediate international sanctions following yesterday's act of murderous barbarism, when the playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority-rights activists were summarily executed on the orders of the junta despite billowing protests from all over the world. The Commonwealth will destroy its very nature if it continues to give sanctuary to the amoral thugs responsible for yesterday's outrage, deliberately and provocatively timed to occur just as the Commonwealth conference was just getting underway in Auckland. The Commonwealth should respond in kind. No one, of course, can be absolutely sure whether stronger action would have prevented the despots masquerading as Nigeria's leaders from flouting world opinion in such a bloody way: but it might at least have prevented General Abacha from believing that the West would merely wring its hands in ritual sorrow while retaining its strong trading links with Nigeria. John Major's Government should hang its head in shame for feebly describing the illegal trial as "flawed", hoping against the odds that Nigeria's generals would succumb to honeyed words from Foreign Office officials. Shell, the giant international corporation with the lion's share of Nigeria's oil — which it is developing with the state-owned oil company — weakly hid its concern behind a barrel of oil. Even Nelson Mandela — who should know better than any other leader the possibilities of international pressure — has been tarnished by the affair. Despite an impassioned plea from Ken Saro-Wiwa's son, Mr Mandela preferred quiet words to sanctions out of a misplaced loyalty for the support which Nigeria, under different rulers, gave to his freedom struggle. Yet in the end, sanctions played a crucial role in breaking up South Africa's apartheid regime.

And that is what should happen now — a multi-pronged imposition of sanctions while the whiff of moral outrage still ruffles the air: a block on all communications with Nigeria, especially air travel; a trade embargo, particularly on oil which is the lifeblood of the economy (or would have been had the generals not siphoned so much of it away for their own ends) and a freeze on Nigeria's assets invested abroad, especially those of the ruling junta — if they can be found. Above all, there should be an immediate end to all arms exports. In theory, this shouldn't be necessary, because an EU ban is supposed to have been in operation for a year. But Britain has flouted it so frequently — 30 times in all — that it might as well not be there. Last night the first step in this direction was taken. The International Finance Corp, the private sector lending arm of the World Bank, stopped its planned involvement in funding a $3 billion natural gas project in southeast Nigeria. Let that be the cue for others.

Nigeria, potentially a rich democracy, has been drained of its wealth and has little left now to lose except its dignity. Tragically, nothing can bring back the lives of those so callously executed after a trial in which defence lawyers were harassed, prosecution witnesses bribed or threatened and Mr Saro-Wiwa's elderly mother and his wife beaten outside the court. The least we can do to ensure that they didn't die in vain is to take prompt action to bring this hateful, dictatorial regime to an end and to restore democracy, and the glimmering prospect of prosperity back to a people who have suffered enough. Political miracles have happened in other parts of the world and in Africa itself. If the rest of the world can once again focus its power on a single problem, another miracle might happen in the wake of yesterday's carnage.

Size doesn't matter?

DID parents, teachers and commentators all get it wrong? Yesterday the Government's chief inspector of schools suggested large classes hold children back in their first two years of primary school but make little difference later. This is not a new message from Chris Woodhead, the head of the Office for Standards in Education. He suggested to a teachers' conference in September that bigger classes might be tolerable if that allowed teachers more time to prepare lessons and take extra training courses to improve their skills. Now he has released a report backing up his assertion. Based on an analysis of 200,000 lessons monitored by school inspectors in nearly 1,800 schools, the report declares that teaching methods and classroom organisation have a greater impact on learning than the size of the class. There are exceptions in the case of children with special educational needs or low attaining secondary school pupils, but the campaign to reduce class sizes for average and above average children is regarded as misguided. Stand by for Guardian man and Guardian woman to get out their marching banners.

Before the march begins, let some concessions be made. The Chief Inspector should be congratulated on picking up this hot political potato. He ought to be providing facts on key educational disputes of the day. He has more information on standards than anyone else. Moreover, the report is based on the disinterested judgment of inspectors, who at the time they were monitoring the classes were inspecting the quality of lessons rather than class size. So the inspectors cannot be accused of going into the schools to do the bidding of the Education Secretary, who has persistently argued that class size is not as important as teachers and parents insist. Mr Woodhead is right to argue that a bad teacher with 35 children will be a bad teacher with 25, even if keeping discipline will be easier with smaller classes. And, of course, the standards of the teaching profession must be raised as teachers themselves admit in private. The inspectors, even before they were privatised, consistently found one-third of all classes to be "poor or very poor". The review two years ago of urban schools, to which 20 per cent of all children go, while sympathetic to teachers in terms of the stressful surroundings, was an indictment of the education provided.

There is one serious flaw, however, in the report. What Mr Woodhead has overlooked — as he had the grace to concede to our Education Editor yesterday — is that the inspectors themselves might have adjusted their reports according to class size. Teachers with larger classes could have been marked less severely in terms of individual contact with children than smaller classes. Logic suggests this should have happened. It would be unfair to mark them down in such circumstances. So what the report says about older children needs to be taken with a pinch of salt. What it says about early primary school years needs urgent attention: smaller classes are critical for this age group. The report endorses this. Primary schools are being hardest hit because that is where the school population is growing fastest. Smaller class sizes allow teachers to give more attention to individual children and more time to children falling behind. Average class sizes in Britain are already twice as large as some European states. They must not be allowed to grow any bigger.

MARTIN WOOLLACOTT explains why Israel must find an identity not based on the issues of land and settlers, and DEREK BROWN, right, reports on Rabin's successor

How the land lies now

THE rabbi from the Golan said the problem was hate. He was one of hundreds of religious representatives who met in a Jerusalem conference hall last week. Anguishing over what they saw as the accusation that "the murderer came from your side", they fear an attack on their way of life, and on their right to a part in shaping the nation.

Extremism in Israel springs less out of the territorial question than out of the sense that a community and an identity is under threat. The hate, the rabbi felt, could easily be — had already been — focused on them. It is hard to understand what has happened in Israel without looking at the reversal of the fortunes of the religiously-orientated groups inspired by settlements founded in the last 10 years. The settlers were told they were new pioneers whose dedication and bravery were replacing those of the early socialists. That seemed to underline an enhanced status for the Orthodox religious, just when they were achieving prominence in institutions like the army and when their parties, notably the National Religious Party, were often pivotal in parliamentary politics. Land, settlements, social mobility, political success, and religious belief appeared to be in synthesis.

But the sense of a breakthrough, of being on the verge of a leading position in mainstream Israeli society, was followed by a cruel disillusion. When Labour came to power in 1992, the settlers went from being heroes to nuisances overnight, and the larger community felt diminished and threatened as a result. In negotiations with the Palestinians and the Arab states, settlements had always been contentious: but until the Likud fell, the die was not cast. For Labour, which planned to preserve many big settlements, the settlers were obstacles. For the Likud, they were assets, bodies on the street in the contest with Labour. Some settlers, using funds from the US that came directly rather than through established institutions, may have seen themselves as half outside the state and half outside the law.

What they felt was also felt to a degree by people of modern Orthodox background in Israel. Professor Charles Liebman, a political scientist at Bar-Ilan University, where Rabin's assassin was a student, says the settlers felt "a grave loss of self-esteem . . . their enormous sense that they were the real Israelis was shaken". Hirsh Goodman, editor of the Jerusalem Report, in a prescient commentary three weeks ago, blamed both Rabin and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu for the hysterical mood of the settlers and their supporters: Rabin refused to empathise or explain while Netanyahu could offer no practical alternative to Labour policy but still wanted to use the settlers' anger.

The appearance of small groups ready to use violence is hardly surprising. Facts about the Eyal group of which Yigal Amir was a member are sparse, but there is no evidence of widespread conspiracy. Fertilised in part by racist ideology that Rabbi Meir Kahane brought from the US, they represent the extreme form of the new religious activism. The transformation of a tradition whose recourse in times of adversity used to be to pray and fast to one in which action is seen as justified underlines how much has changed in religion, and in Israel.

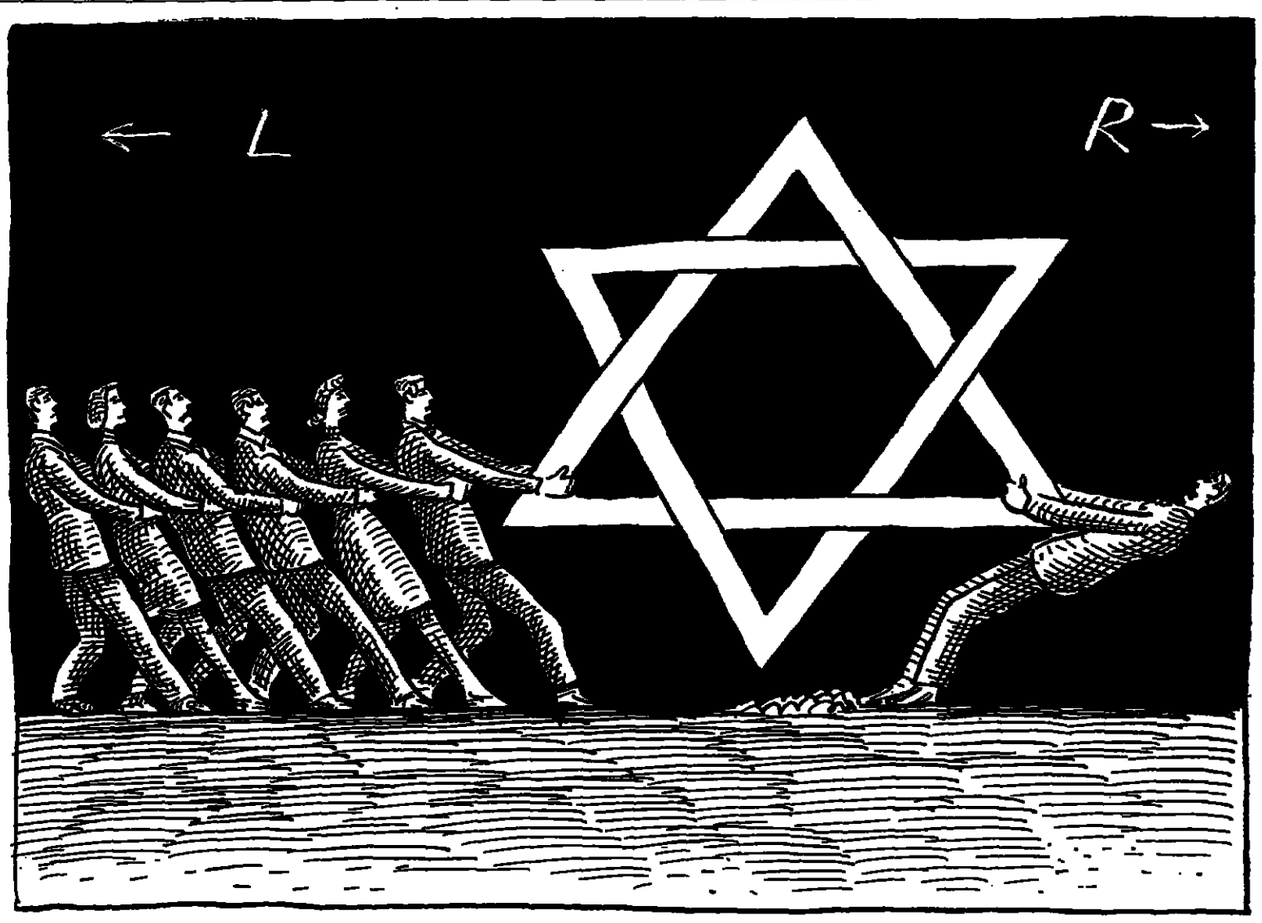
The political struggle there has ceased to be about a settlement with Palestinians and Syrians, and is being driven by the desperation of groups who feel they will be losers in a new dispensation they neither want nor can control. Likud, as the main opposition party, fears this. Without the territorial issue they do not know where to go. The era in which Israel's political life was defined by argument over the physical space the nation should, could, or ought to occupy ended last week.

FOR all the difficulties ahead in negotiations, Israeli politics now moves on from geography. The murder of Yitzhak Rabin means that the opposition can no longer shape its strategies around the questions of if and when to hand over land to Arabs. The bankruptcy of that approach is clear. Some Israelis argue that it led directly to Rabin's death; most that the territorial question can never again be debated, as it was recently, on the streets. It becomes almost a technical subject, at least one where politicians of all backgrounds will avoid emotional or accusatory language.

The change strands Likud. That party combined its radical inheritance with a flexibility that enabled it to govern for 15 years and to avoid dealing with contradictions at the heart of its ideology. Likud inherited a commitment to Greater Israel and the principle that there could never be peace with the Arabs until they were completely cowed. But it made peace with Egypt, handing over Sinai. It acquiesced in the peace treaty with Jordan, giving up by implication its claim to the East Bank. Party leaders avoid mentioning Gaza. Likud's purity on territory has been breached. The new Likud leader bases his claims not on the sacredness of land but on an overdone version of the Islamist threat. Without the settlers, Likud is bereft of a strategy. The economy is booming, party differences on social policy are muddled, and Likud's hold on the Oriental constituency has been reduced by the defection of David Levy, its most important Oriental leader.

Israelis have for some time been trying to look forward to a politics that is not about the territories. Some hope that politics will in time revolve around environment, privatisation, open government, constitutional reform, quality of life. Others, like Professor Liebman, believe that politics will develop into a cultural struggle — between those who want Israel to become like any other state and those who insist on a Jewish identity, not identical with, but related to, the views of religious believers. He hopes that Rabin's death will take the edge off the ferocity with which that struggle will be waged.

The Labour government, largely secular, represents to many religious Israelis a tendency in national life which will discard the land and in time everything else distinctively Jewish. At the conference hall, the concern of the rabbis was palpable. "Some of us," says one, "did not do enough to oppose an atmosphere in which this killing could happen. But I feel it's almost like a Chernobyl situation. Religious energy can be terribly dangerous. There was no way to vent the energies building up, and so an explosion comes." The dilemma of Israel is not whether deals with Syria or the Palestinians are worth the risk, but how to be Israel without the issue of the land.



Peres, prime mover of the peace

LAST Saturday morning Shimon Peres was possibly the most unpopular politician in Israel. Today he is Prime Minister, with a mandate more overwhelmingly generous than any Israeli leader has known. The extent of it was indicated by an opinion poll yesterday: 54 per cent support for Peres, and a derisory 23 per cent for Likud opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu. The rest were undecided or won't vote.

But those are just cold figures. The real mandate comes from a week of extraordinary images: a million Israelis trudging, all night long, up the hill to the Knesset to pay their respects to the coffin of Yitzhak Rabin; the pain and pride of a funeral attended by an assembly of world leaders. There were quotes which sounded a change of mood: for example, Sarit, a young girl who went to the square where Rabin was murdered, and said: "He came as our saviour, and we turned our backs on him. I am so ashamed. His memory is what I will now work for." She had been uneasy about the government's peace policies, but now: "I will give back the whole of the Golan Heights (to Syria) for peace."

Yet against all this, the question must be asked — is Peres the man he was seven days ago? At 72, he saw Rabin's body lying shattered on a hospital operating table. He too had been targeted by the killer, and saved only by happenstance. He was thrust into the cares of the highest office with presidents and kings around him, and mobbed by security. The morning after the assassination, Peres was photographed, gaunt and dead-eyed, at the cabinet table. Next to him, draped in black, was Rabin's vacant seat. The same day he told the Labour Knesset caucus: "Fear for the future fills my heart. Boundless and unending fear." It was a cry of despair from a man who had never before shown self-doubt. "In all the years I have known him," said a close friend, "I have never seen him so broken, so vulnerable, so sad."

It was many times said of Peres that his eyes would light up at the mention of the words "prime minister". At 20, he was elected secretary of the Labour youth movement and for more than 50 years he has pursued political office with relentless zeal. Rabin described him as "an indefatigable schemer" and the two men blackened each other's characters for 25 years.

Peres lost the Labour leadership early in 1992 and to his intense chagrin was obliged to play second fiddle to Rabin in the successful election campaign that year. The victory was undoubtedly Rabin's. Both men promised that Labour would bring peace — but only he promised plausibly that it would be peace with security. The public believed Rabin and distrusted Peres, but it was the foreign minister who delivered the goods. Peres decided that the sterile on-off process of formal talks with Palestinian delegates was not working. He cut through the negotiation, and authorised informal, highly secret, direct contacts with the PLO.

IN 1993, the talks started with academics and low-level officials, and ended with Peres flying back from Scandinavia with what was to become the Washington declaration. Two weeks later, in September, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat grasped Rabin's hand at the White House, and flapped it up and down. Rabin looked devastated. He was committed to the accord, and also deeply disturbed by it. The grisly violence which followed confirmed his doubts about Arafat's inability to deliver peace with security. Negotiations on turning the accord into reality limped along over months of recrimination punctuated by suicide bombings. Rabin closed Israel to Palestinian workers from Gaza and the West Bank more and more often. He honed a vision of separation, of a future when Jews and Arabs could share the land without seeing each other.

Peres was working on a very different vision, in which Israel, Palestine, and Jordan would be allies at the heart of a new Middle East order, with open borders instead of ceasefire lines, and prosperity in place of the arms race.

With the negotiations slipping ever further behind schedule, the PLO was able to establish itself in the Gaza Strip and Jericho in 1994: it took another 15 months of suspicion, violence and wrangling to produce agreement on extending self-rule in the West Bank.

That was only six weeks ago. Rabin and Peres, the two old warriors who had devoted a third of their lives to doing each other down, came together as never before in endorsing the self-rule deal. Rabin, in essence, moved toward Peres. The old soldier was finally convinced that Arafat was a reliable peace partner, that the Islamist militants were being curbed, and that the Palestinians could be trusted neighbours.

The rapprochement was symbolised last Saturday night when the two men appeared before a vast peace rally in Tel Aviv, in a good-natured counter-attack on the rightists who vilified them. Peres and Rabin singing the Song of Peace was an eccentric spectacle; their public embrace was electrifying. Half an hour later, Rabin was dead. Those who have seen the acting Prime Minister every day this week say that after two days in which he appeared devastated, he has steadily recovered purpose and vigour.

Peres has been Prime Minister before, in 1984-86, and it is easily forgotten, even here, that he was the most popular leader Israel has known. Since then his reputation has reverted to that of an earlier phase, when he was abused and despised. Yet now he has the unparalleled asset of a nation united in its determination to respect the wishes of a murdered leader. From now on, the peace, which Peres shaped and made real, will be Rabin's peace; a monument for a fallen rival.

Smallweed

SINCE I warned you against him a couple of weeks ago, the Conservative member for Dover, David Shaw, has enhanced his already compelling claim to be Britain's least enticing MP. Ten days ago, he rose on a point of order to discuss the activities of Glenda Jackson, Labour MP for Hampstead and the union (Aslef) which sponsors her. The Speaker couldn't understand quite what he was alleging but she caught the word "corrupt" all right, and asked to have the complaint in writing. By Thursday, Shaw still hadn't supplied his evidence, though the Speaker said she'd been told a letter was on its way.

Who should pop up when points of order began on Monday but Shaw. Dripping contrition? Apparently not. Instead he produced a new complaint against Margaret Hodge, Labour MP for Barking, adding with his customary charm that Hodge had a reputation for aiding and abetting child abuse. He got no further. Betty Boothroyd, who (according to Simon Hoggart) was next day as angry as he'd ever seen her, shouted at him to withdraw and apologise. He withdrew: he did not apologise.

At least he'd now written the letter; but it reached the Speaker's office at twenty to four, too late for her to see it before she reached the chamber. So the matter wasn't settled till Tuesday just before the Commons prorogued, when she said she'd found nothing in his letter to sustain the charge of corruption.

I have read the record with my usual diligence and I cannot find the word "sorry" ever emerging from Shaw. If the people of Dover insist on electing this fellow to Parliament, they deserve to have their town fall to the French.

ON MONDAY, Paul Johnson complained in Wednesday's Mail, "what was essentially the left of the Tory party" deserted John Major over Nolan, ignored his advice, and put him in a humiliating minority of 51. The Tory left? Since when have Rupert Allason, Barry Legg, Barry Porter, Sir John Stanley, and Allan Stewart subscribed to "the Tory left"? Or among the abstainers, Richard Body, Winston Churchill, Barry Field, Phil Gallie, Christopher Gill, or Tony Marlow? Has this fellow entirely lost touch with reality?

JUST IN time the nation remembered to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the death of John Keats. No such luck for Dean Swift, who died in 1745: the 250th anniversary of his death should have been marked on October 17, but apart from the Irish Times, no one bothered. This neglect was partly repaired this week by the London Library, who commissioned a lecture from Victoria Glendinning, now adding Swift to a list of biographees which already takes in Edith Sitwell and Anthony Trollope. Hers was a portrait of a great man greatly traduced; loved — despite all reports to the contrary — by a good many people, and a hero, despite his violent tirades in the Tory interest, even to Michael Foot. ("He manipulated public opinion on behalf of the Tory party," Glendinning said, making him sound like a prototype spin doctor. Central Office could certainly do with him now.)

Glendinning's performance had only one flaw: her sudden, parenthetical claim that you couldn't love both Dean Swift and Dr Johnson; one had to choose. An assertion so provocative that fans of the doctor had to break off from listening to worry about it. What's more, unless I misread her, she seemed inclined to score my hero Macaulay on Swift's side rather than Johnson's — even though at the end of his essay on Johnson, Macaulay accords him one of the noblest and most affectionate tributes ever paid by one great man to another.

THE DEPARTURE of Colin Powell is good news, as everyone says, for Bob Dole, especially since the American voter has reduced Newt Gingrich's popularity rating to a mere 15 per cent. It might have been better still had the general adopted the snooty practice, in line with novelist Anthony and Thatcher sidekick Sir Charles, of calling himself Pole, not Powell. That might have been worth a few additional votes from the careless and inattentive, not a constituency to be sneezed at in any election.

This euphony reminds Smallweed of the university lecturer who, at the height of the miners' strike, thought up a ruse to force Mrs Thatcher to utter a Scargillite slogan. He told friends that he planned to accost her at a reception, work the conversation round to Germany, and refer to Chancellor Dole; whereupon the lady in her usual bossy way was bound to correct him: "Kohl, not Dole." Unhappily, faced with her haughty demeanour and basilisk eye, he chickened out, and the words remained unspoken.

Doorstepping . . . the environmentalists encounter an unconvinced suit outside the conference PHOTOGRAPHS: ELAINE KENNEDY (above) CAROLINE AUSTIN (below)

GORDON BROWN argues for his jobs-for-youth policy while, below, Labour is urged to act boldly

Putting duty into opportunity

THIS week Labour announced an employment plan for the under 25s: the proposals David Blunkett and I have put forward signify a turning point for employment policy in this country, the first step to Labour's modernisation of the welfare state for the 1990s.

"New deal for the Under 25s" matches opportunities with responsibilities. Our four new options for work and education will release the wasted talents of an abandoned generation and translate our full employment goals into practical policies for action in government.

For the first time Britain will have a taskforce with environmental objectives that can excite the energies of young people, as well as educate and train them for employment. Thousands of young unemployed will also benefit from a £60 a week tax incentive which businesses will receive for taking on additional young workers. They are not make-work schemes, but real jobs with wages and education. The 16-hour rule debars the unemployed from getting the college education that could help in their search for employment. For those without educational qualifications, this iniquitous rule will now be set aside.

This new departure is the first stage — and only the first. We must continue to match opportunity with responsibility as we provide new choices not just for young people, but for the long-term unemployed and single mothers wanting to move from welfare into work.

The welfare state under Labour will not be the patchy and inadequate safety net it has become under the Tories, where people sink into deepening despair. Our economic policy is designed to make the welfare state of the 1990s a springboard to new opportunities so that people can secure jobs and realise their potential to the full.

Tackling unemployment is not only right but also the efficient thing to do. Action today can cut the social security bills of economic failure — and release resources for vital services. Spending now can save money later. Funding our employment programme — the sole purpose of a one-off windfall tax on the utilities — is the best way of breaking the logjam.

The Tory approach is very different. As we said in our economic policy document, A New Economic Future For Britain, "the Tories' approach has been to penalise the long-term unemployed, rather than to tackle the problem". Conservative schemes, often low quality and certainly with low government commitment, have tried to disguise the problem rather than solve it. They spend more time monitoring and penalising the unemployed than helping them re-train and find jobs.

The principles of the Labour approach have now been approved by the Economic Policy Commission, the National Policy Forum and are set out most recently in the policy document which was passed at the party conference in October.

The policy document says: "Labour promises a fair deal for the unemployed. We recognise not only the responsibility of the long-term unemployed to seek work, but that these obligations must be matched by the Government's responsibility to promote real opportunities to work and train."

OUR theme of rights and responsibilities offers not just a pathway to more jobs and better services, but to a new welfare state for the 1990s. Whether in our new policies for the young, the long-term unemployed, or for families, opportunities and responsibilities will be the theme that will dominate our welfare state modernisation.

Responsibilities for government in providing opportunities to work and train. Responsibilities for young people to choose the option best suited to their needs. And responsibilities for employers too. Ensuring responsibility on the part of employers, as the document says, is an essential element of the modern industrial policy, and lies behind the social chapter and minimum wage. Socialists have never believed that state action obviates the need for individual responsibility. Indeed, any notion that socialism somehow substitutes state action for personal responsibility would have been anathema to Keir Hardie.

Socialists hold a view of human nature that asserts that we are not just self-seekers but share moral commitments, and that action by government or the community as a whole must support personal responsibility and never substitute for it. So to change an old aphorism, the issue is not simply what government can do for you; it is what government can enable you to do for yourself.

Just as the New Right is wrong to claim there is no role for community action, even in support of personal responsibility, so too it is wrong to believe that somehow opportunities come free of responsibility.

There can and will be no such thing as a free ride under Labour. By denying opportunities and then enforcing obligations the Conservatives would not only leave people on benefit but punish them for being unemployed. By matching opportunities to responsibilities, Labour will ensure people are in work, not on benefit.

I believe that young people will want to, and should accept, reasonable offers of work. A deduction from benefit where reasonable high-quality offers are refused was recommended by Beveridge, has been Labour's position in government since, and happens in every other major country.

We must never again see a generation of young people abandoned, to earn nothing and learn nothing. That is why Labour is calling upon all sections of our community — business, voluntary organisations, and young people themselves — to join us to end the waste and bring moral purpose and economic responsibility to the government of Britain.

Gordon Brown is Labour MP for Dunfermline and shadow chancellor

Inside London's Park Lane Hotel, a business summit discusses dominating mega markets. Outside, environment groups protest at the consequences. JOHN VIDAL meets both sides

Parallel worlds fight for the globe

WHAT will £3,000 buy? In MacWorld, where businesspeople live and breathe ways to keep up with competitors, and dominate the global market place, it can buy one person 14 hours of lectures (with accompanying salmon and fine wines). The core of this week's World Management Summit conference has been the talks by Nobel economic laureates, global business leaders and US professors — gurus of globalism in London to tell lesser businesses how to "penetrate new markets", and "take charge of the world's future".

Banks, the car, oil, and nuclear industries expect tips from Paul Preston, president of McDonald's UK on "how to successfully manage the globalisation of corporations". Harvard Business School's Jeffrey Sachs ("probably the most important economist in the world" — Time) is due to speak and Peter Drucker, at 83, the guru of business gurus, is promised in screen link-up. The speakers are being paid £5,000 to talk for 40 minutes in the ballroom of the Park Lane Hotel.

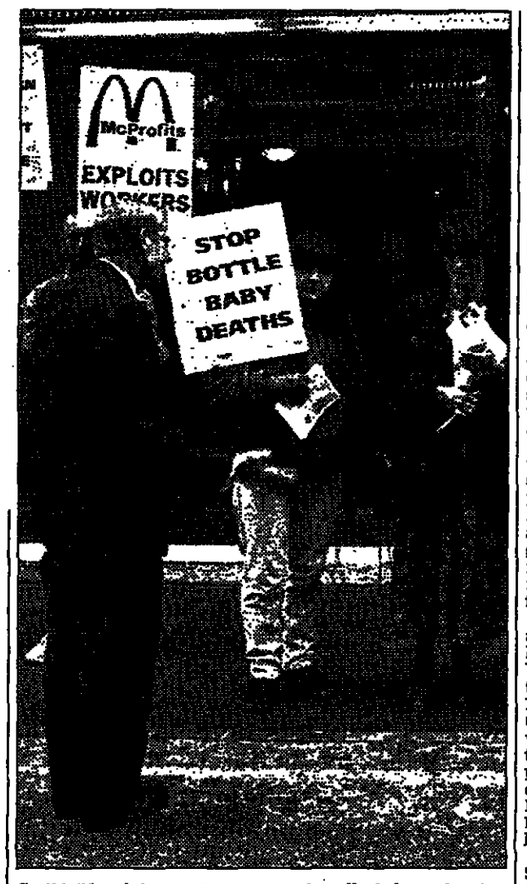
Uninvited, but coming anyway by train and bike from Cambridge, is Patty from the Baby Milk Action pressure group. Patty's beef is the Nestlé Corporation ($42 billion a year turnover). For "penetrating new markets" she reads "selling health-threatening diets to African, Chinese and Indian mothers". The real world, she and her group say, would be a lot safer without the unaccountable, socially irresponsible global-mega-corporations. They wait on the pavement to greet Mike Garrett, head of Nestlé, billed as a speaker.

Hoping to see Preston of McDonalds is Dan from the McLibel Support campaign. McDonald's — turnover $24 billion a year — are suing two young British environmentalists — combined personal income about £5,000 a year — and the case, now 19 months old, will soon be the longest in British civil case history. It will go on to next spring. The giant has spent an estimated £10 million pursuing them through the courts; the McLibel Two £20,000 on five years of self-defence. For Preston's conference fee, Dan could fly in 17 witnesses from the US.

Inside the ballroom, 120 suits are buttoned up and Bernard Fournier, MD of Rank Xerox is talking at £2-a-second on "Ensuring your business plan for sustainable profitable growth into the 21st century exploits and leverages your core competences to the maximum". No one knows what it means, least of all the conference organiser who thought it up. "Well, the words are random," she says. "It just gets the suits going."

Outside the hotel, Patty and friends wave more banners and leaflets in brisker English: "Health before profits"; "Stop baby milk death"; "People not profits". The protesters talk to passers-by. They have been linking the death sentence on Ken Saro-Wiwa with people buying Shell petrol in Britain. They think transnationalism feeds inequalities and is the source of much oppression of ethnic groups. They talk of community and individual empowerment. They laugh a lot.

Inside, Fournier is flashing questions on a screen. "Is there life after the quality journey?" he asks the audience. "What is the Rank Xerox 2000 Vision Team D?". "Face the truth, live the experience, involve change agents, *be flexible*," he advises proto-globals. The screen flashes "thank you" three times.



Then it's on to Akio Miyabayashi, the MD of Minolta Europe, who sees every future market dominated by four or five global corporations, each "infinitely caring" for billions of customers. "Global corporations must love people," he says. *What?* He tells a story of a Japanese restaurateur who, recognising that a customer's false teeth were loose, quickly changed the menu to softer food: "That's love." "Successful companies *imagine*," he says. "Creativity is the key to globalisation. Think local, act global." But doesn't globalisation mean worldwide sameness? "Yes. Loss of old identity. New identities created."

As the suits file into the mahogany-panelled gents to adjust red poppies and ties before a quick round of canapés, the protesters bring out their wholemeal loaves on the pavement. Some head for the Nigerian High Commission, where other groups are gathering to protest at Shell's globalism — and the death sentences.

Earth First! go first. Nine people padlock themselves to the Commission railings and are promptly charged for trespassing on diplomatic territory. The give the names of the nine Ogonis ordered to die in Port Harcourt. The police lock Nick Jukes and three others in the cells for 26 hours. "It's up to people at the grassroots to protest against companies like Shell," he says.

They are followed by International *PEN*, established writers who fight for imprisoned writers. They are sincere, polite and kissy. Harold Pinter issues a subjunctive-ridden statement by telephone, and then arrives; Tom Stoppard is concerned; Michael Frayn is charming; Edward Blishen says he last demonstrated in the seventies. Some think that Lord Longford, who has materialised amongst them, is a ghost: "No, I demonstrate every week. I go to prisons," he says.

There's a gentle commotion in the crowd of 150 people. "Shouldn't we chant something?" someone asks. Steve Vizinczey suggests the writers semiotically or metaphorically break a window. "No, no. This is a life or death matter. Keep it peaceful or we won't have a demonstration," begs an organiser. A letter is handed over to the High Commission. They shuffle around, uneasily sober. They murmur approval of Yomi Ojetunde, chair of the Society of Nigerian Dentists and other Ogonis who spontaneously sing: "Abacha, he's a thief. He should go." "Who composed that?" asks an elegant, bearded man.

Back in the ballroom, Gary Hammell of Harvard University says US and British managers have produced people obsessed with "downsizing, delayering, decluttering and divesting". A company, he says "must get to the future not only first, but for less". Jeffrey Sachs talks of global integration and a Kodak man tells how his team set new standards using "realtime process feedback systems and robotics". Preston of McDonald's says one downside of globalism may be that local incidents can soon become international crises. The man from Shell is silent.

"These companies come and throw confusion in our heads," says Ugandan poet Vincent Magombe, co-ordinator of the African Literature Forum, standing outside the Commission. "To start with, we think they are good. But they act culturally. They sit in place of our traditions, they change our language, our philosophies, the way we think. It's the indifference that hurts."

No one from the Business Summit is aware of the Ogoni, the writers or Patty and her friends outside. "They're like the homeless, aren't they?" says one senior analyst. "Something that's just there now. We haven't got time to take on every issue." At another lunch table no one has heard of Ken Saro-Wiwa or the Ogoni. "An Amazon tribe?" asks a Dutchman. "No, a river," says another.

"People fear to speak up in this environment," says a woman from Arthur Anderson's, a $12-billion-a-year company advising international firms how to compete better in the global market. Anderson's, sponsors of the summit, have developed a "total knowledge base", with everything the company knows on a CD-rom. There are millions of pages, but there's nothing there about corporate ethics or responsibilities, or how to deal with writers, demonstrations or death on the orders of military dictatorship.

"We feel helpless," says one executive who admits to Greenpeace leanings. "Yes, we are all a bit narrow," adds another. "But then what can we do?"

An economic swing of the pendulum

Martin Kettle

IF AND when the history of the next Labour government ever comes to be written, then November 1995 will count as a month of special significance in the underpinning of the Blair years. The most obvious reason for that, not in any way to be underestimated for its obviousness, is Kenneth Clarke's looming Budget, which has long been seen on all sides as the biggest Conservative opportunity and, by the same token, as the biggest Labour challenge of the pre-election period.

Let me make just one further observation about the Budget: last week's Conservative shambles over Nolan seriously damaged the Prime Minister. That makes the 1922 Committee elections next week even more sensitive than they were anyway and gives John Major an even stronger reason than before for wanting Clarke to deliver an up-front, vote-winning package on November 28. For this Budget is the Tories' best weapon not just for the 1997 general election but also for the 1996 local elections, and the results next spring will be a key political factor in determining Major's own future as leader. After a recuperative summer, everything is again looking contingent for Major. His future lies more than ever in Clarke's hands, and the Chancellor and the PM must both know it.

Blair by contrast is sitting astonishingly pretty. Once again almost everything is going his way, with the Conservatives currently offering several open routes to goal and the opinion poll lead stretching once more to extravagant dimensions. From the point of view of Blair as the Opposition leader, Christmas has come early this year.

But from the point of view of Blair as the prospective prime minister, life is not nearly so simple. This is the time when options are hardening in the big areas of policy. And of these none is bigger or more important, both in the short and the long term, than economic policy. When Blair addresses the CBI conference in Birmingham on Monday he comes as the first Labour leader in 30 years to whom British industry is compelled to listen. But the converse is just as important. He also comes as the first Labour leader to address British industry in 30 years who will really have to mean what he says.

The need to get Labour's core economic argument right and to get it across is therefore now pressing and paramount. This speech is an important opportunity to make good some important omissions. Much that is fundamental to what happens in a Blair government ought to flow from the message to industry next week. This does not mean that it will necessarily unveil a hatful of exciting new tricks. The importance of Monday's speech is that it goes far beyond the tax agenda which will dominate the much more party-political Budget debate in three weeks' time. It is, or ought to be, about establishing the supervening economic ideas, priorities and targets of Labour in office.

It is hard to dispute that there is now a tide running in favour of the kind of active government ideas which Blair will outline on Monday. One of the most serious indictments of current Conservative thinking is that not only has it failed to respond to this change of mood but has even set itself further against it. If even Francis Fukuyama can write a book stressing that market economics of itself does not spontaneously produce cohesive and inclusive societies, then it is clear that the pendulum is swinging back in favour of the legitimacy of national governments as necessary agents of beneficial political economy.

THE test, however, is whether Blair succeeds in defining the role of government in a way which is socially beneficial, economically constructive and politically rewarding at the same time, but without either damning or endorsing everything which has been achieved in the deregulatory revolution which he will inherit. To one side lies the proven pitfall of blinkered economic nationalism; to the other the more recently proven disaster of obsessional economic globalism. Somewhere in the middle lies the legitimate place for the patriotic economics which Labour now needs to develop.

Governments whose economics are not patriotic are ultimately on the road to destruction. The voters realise that, even if governments do not. That is why the Conservatives are so disabled by their handling of the exchange rate crisis of 1992. For Labour the art of a new and modern form of patriotic economics must not lie in taking powers to itself but in ensuring those with whom it must cut economic deals — industry, labour or whoever — will deliver their side of the bargain in the national interest. Government can create opportunities for industry and for workers, but industry and workers also have to give something in return.

This is nevertheless a sensitive moment to be defining Labour's economic path. The swing of the pendulum means that progressive thinking about political economy is embarked on a particularly interesting transitional phase. After a period of acquiescence over economic strategy, a less consensual debate is once again beginning to develop — within the Labour Party as elsewhere. It has already begun to raise big questions, and these are likely to become more sharply delineated over the coming years. The spontaneous rejection of the inadequate simplicities of monetarist and *laissez faire* economics is a warning to Labour — and indeed to British industry — not to be too hidebound in the face of the new momentum.

This week's debate in Germany about the Maastricht timetable and the criteria for European monetary union is a particularly dramatic illustration of the international quality of this discussion. For years, Labour's Social Democrat opposite numbers in Germany have been absolutely solid with the ruling Christian Democrats in their adherence to European liberal economic orthodoxy. Now, however, they are beginning to voice serious doubts about both the speed and mechanisms of EMU. In the sober world of German political economy this is revolutionary stuff. The repercussions in domestic politics will be interesting to watch, but the point of wider interest outside Germany is that the SPD is being compelled to take up an economic stance which is at once more heterodox, more interventionist, more patriotic and, perhaps above all, more political than in the recent past.

In Britain the argument is only partly about Europe, though it is a very important dimension of it. The striking thing is that the old orthodoxies of the 1980s seem at last to be crumbling. Blair may have something to prove next week. But so do British industry and business. A dose of patriotic economics would not go amiss there either.

Oh yes, it just could be you

Continued from page 13

terms of owner-occupation it stands 558th. On the tests of households having access to at least one car, it rates 555th. Seek the Lord and salvation, and there's every hope, if His agents are to believed, of eventual rescue. Until then, less assured but far nearer, there's the lottery.

None of this is new. After the French Revolution, the state lottery was abolished. "It is all the more dangerous," a leading opponent argued, "since it devours the substance of the people, and especially of the poor. It was born of despotism, and used with perfidy to drown out the cry of misery, deluding the poor with false hope. The lottery, an odious financial trick, invades the product of the poor man's toil and brings despair upon innumerable families." The lottery officers tried to obstruct abolition. Thousands of jobs would be lost. The people, they said, 'must be allowed to keep their amusements, their hopes and their dreams. The poor, it was argued, "need to be distracted from their poverty by the hope of the fortune". They even prophesised uprisings: which didn't happen, partly because the lottery simply went underground, where it continued to thrive. In 1797, the ban was lifted, only to be reimposed under the restored monarchy. In England, too, there were bans which sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. The Lotteries Prohibition Bill of 1692-3 made little difference. But the winding up of state lotteries in 1862 did. "All lotteries end for ever: 18 July," said the bills.

People once looked at places as full of injustice as Hackney and vowed that the world must be changed. The dreams of the poor could be satisfied

5
14 times

only by revolution, peaceful or otherwise. The intentions of those who pulled down the slums and built estates like the Nightingale (and there must be many worse estates than the Nightingale) were impeccable. What they did in effect right across the great cities was to pull down horizontal slums and replace them with vertical ones. Once people fondly imagined — *Spero Meliora* — that salvation lay in changing the national government.

They are more realistic now. If you want to escape, take any chance that's going. Yes, the odds against winning outright are something like 14 million to one against; but so were the odds against Lee Ryan and lottery rat Gardiner. With the lottery, anything's possible. Yes, it could just be you whose number comes up tonight.

Taxing ideas on inheritance

IN characterising the proposal to reduce or abolish inheritance tax as merely outrageous, Will Hutton (Commentary, November 8) is surely guilty of extreme adjectival moderation.

Although I totally agree with the arguments he marshalls against this iniquitous proposition, he, perhaps inadvertantly, lends credence to the impression that people with assets of less than £154,000 are exempted from this form of tax.

Thanks to the National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) Regulation 1992, assets in excess of £8,000 are taken by the appropriate social services authority to pay for nursing home or residential care where it becomes necessary. In practice, this *means that on a random* basis, many elderly people with modest estates are *de facto* suffering inheritance tax at rates well in excess of the 40 per cent maximum rate payable by the very wealthy — ie up to nearly 95 per cent.

Prior to the introduction of this vintage piece of governmental gradgrinding, residential care for the elderly sick was rightly considered to have been an intrinsic element of the NHS, funded from tax and national insurance revenues to which those same people had contributed during their working lives.

To force the old, the weak and the ill — the most vulnerable members of society — to pick up a bill which had hitherto been borne by the whole community is indeed outrageous. To *pass on the benefit* to the rich and privileged would, I submit, be obscene.

David Townsend.
11 Janmead,
Hutton,
Brentwood,
Essex CM13 2PU.

IF people are to be persuaded that raising inheritance tax is a good thing then it has to have a purpose that people find acceptable.

I would expect a reduction in the threshhold, and an increase in the rate to bring substantial benefit to the elderly, in the short term, and, in the longer term, help to finance sensible tax cuts, such as equating the personal allowance with the minimum wage.

Barry Martin.
Gravel Lane,
Drayton,
Abingdon OX14 4HY.

Poland's writing on the wall

WITH reference to your recent coverage of Poland, the facts are that anti-semitism in that country is far from dead. When one takes the train from Warsaw to Wroclaw you can see anti-semitic graffiti on walls of factories and railroad stations. Some have been there for years.

In May I saw, next door to the Holiday Inn in Warsaw, an apartment building extensively covered by anti-semitic scribbles. In Wroclaw, there is a general anti-semitic atmosphere and the Jewish community, the second largest in Poland, is made to feel it.

After 50 years the Jewish congregation has been fighting for its synagogue, stolen by the communist regime, to be returned to it. Only now, when Wroclaw will be the venue for the world's cardinals' meeting next year, the Polish cardinal has taken some action: The Jewish congregation, still having to wait for ownership documents, now has a synagogue, the largest in Poland and the second largest in Europe, without a roof and devastated inside and outside. The funds for rebuilding have been raised but the permission to do so is still awaited.

In the Jewish cemetery 12,000 graves were destroyed and plundered by the Poles. All the marble was stolen and most of it can be found in the large Catholic cemetery nearby, with the Jewish inscriptions and markings still visible.

Anyone who thinks you gave an accurate description of the new Poland, should go there and have a good look round.

Eric F Bowes.
Palm Isles,
9963 Seacrest Circle,
Boynton Beach,
Florida 33437, USA.

On the right track for profit

THAT the Government's financial advisers consider accurate financial information to be of "minimal relevance to potential investors" in the sale of Railtrack should come as no surprise (Lack of financial details threaten Railtrack sell-off, November 10).

Financial details are only marginally relevant to a sale in which, as in the case of all previous privatisations, potential investors will know *that they are picking up capital* assets at a bargain-basement price.

Whoever buys Railtrack will receive, practically free as incidental to the sale, a vast quantity of unused and under-utilised land which, having been despoiled by formerly-used railway sidings and planned-to-be-closed track, is ripe for resale to property developers.

And as a monopoly organisation, the new Railtrack owners will be guaranteed a huge operating profit. Who needs detail?

Dr J P Rockett.
Upperstones,
High Street, Stonebroom,
Derbyshire DE55 6JT.

Do you really need 50p more than he does?

50p a day won't get you very far. But use it to sponsor a child in need and it could go a lot further than you ever thought possible.

Just £15 a month helps us provide clean water, health care, basic education, seeds and tools for growing food... all the things that could make life better, not just *for one child*, but everyone in the community.

In return, we'll send you a photo of the child you sponsor and regular progress reports from our field workers. You will receive messages from the child and can write if you wish. That way you not only *see* your money working, you'll feel really involved. Could you honestly spend 50p any better?

Please sponsor a child today.

☐ Yes, I would like to sponsor a child and enclose my first contribution.
☐ £15 (monthly) ☐ £182 (yearly)
☐ I can't sponsor a child now, but enclose a gift of:
☐ £200 ☐ £100 ☐ £50 ☐ £25 ☐ £_____
☐ Please send me further details about sponsoring a child, or call: 01460 61073.
Make cheques/POs payable to ACTIONAID, and send to: ACTIONAID, FREEPOST BS4888, Chard, Somerset TA20 1BR
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Tel _____

ACTIONAID

Muslims and me, by Darius

I WAS disappointed to read your article (Etonian swindler turns to Islam, November 8), all the more so because I have always considered the Guardian to be one of the few serious newspapers in the land.

Let me correct a few errors. On my mother's side, my family origins are Iranian; on my father's, they are English. I have not "counted few Muslim friends among [my] circle of wealthy and aristocratic connections" — I have attended Muslim prayers at mosques for years (long before my imprisonment), and many of my friends are Muslim.

In addition, my "circle of friends" is not confined to the "aristocracy" — I have friends from all sorts of different religious, social and ethnic backgrounds — something which unimaginative journalists find difficult to cope with.

I have never said that "Christianity doesn't impress [me]." Indeed, anyone who knows anything about Islam will tell you that Christ is very much revered by Muslims and that Christians are considered distinct from non-believers and are called "people of the Book" *in the Koran. I will not bore you* with a theological lecture but it is perfectly possible to be a Muslim and to be attracted by many aspects of Christianity.

Your snide remark was therefore typical of the ignorant and totally two-dimensional view of Islam which predominates in this country's press.

Darius Guppy.
HMP Sudbury,
Ashbourne,
Derbyshire DE6 5HW.

I WAS amazed to read that only 12,000 letters of complaint had been received by the Broad*casting Standards Council.* (TV: who's complaining, November 9). This may not fully represent the whingers in society but it does highlight the fact that they are an incredibly small minority. I have never understood why we pay so much homage to them.

Matt Cooper.
6 Bream Close,
London N17 9DF.

CAN the ministers who *signed those so-called* "gagging orders" in the cases of Matrix Churchill and now Ordtec be brought before the courts for obstructing and perverting the course of justice by wilfully withholding vital evidence and thereby placing subjects of the Queen in peril of losing their liberty? Whatever happened to that bit in Magna Carta about right and justice being denied to no man?

Tom Burnett.
4 St Edith's Close,
Wilton,
Salisbury,
Wilts SP2 0LU.

IN your leading article (Labour battle over benefits, November 10), you reported ". . . *the TGWU arguing whilst* an element of coercion was new, it could be justified if the schemes were properly funded". I wish to make it clear that this is not the policy of my union; the T&G does not support the unemployed being pushed into workfare for their benefits.

Bill Morris.
General Secretary,
Transport and General Workers' Union,
Transport House,
Palace Street,
London SW1E 5JD.

No comfort in this barren Field

I *DIDN'T know whether to* feel anger or despair when I read Frank Field's blueprint for our society (New Welfare State, November 7). I was angry that this was coming from someone who claims to represent Labour, and felt despair that so much Tory-inspired claptrap is now accepted without question.

Of course, means-testing is to be opposed — but not for the reasons that Field gives. It is wrong because of the destructive effect that means tests have on those who are at the receiving end.

They rob people of their self-worth, they strip them of their entitlements and encourage a penny-pinching attitude by society in which the main objective ceases to be helping those in need but instead becomes that of saving money.

And why should we accept with approval such contemporary jargon as "flexible labour market", "risk-taking" or "dependency culture". Flexibility in the labour market is another way of saying that employers can hire and fire at will, with no *thought for those whose* livelihood is on the line.

And why should we reward "risk-taking" in particular? And what does it mean? What about such qualities as loyalty or reliability? A collective, caring approach cannot be concerned with naked self-interest. It should be aiming to provide secure, long-term jobs within which people can develop their potential — but this is obviously out of fashion today.

Talk of a "dependency culture" comes easily from those who seem to have no awareness of the corrosive effect of long-term unemployment and inadequate levels of income. It denies the reality of what has happened to our society since the Tories came to power. To hear it coming from those who claim to speak for Labour is lamentable.

Alistair Graham.
5 Stanford Road,
Lydney,
Glos GL15 5HS.

FRANK FIELD in his plan for the future of social security recommends that "Every able-bodied claimant (of Income Support) would be required to draw up a job plan of what he or she wishes to achieve during the rest of his or her life."

I am sure that the great majority of able-bodied people who have been reduced to claiming Income Support would rejoice if they could draw up such plans with any realistic expectation.

Isn't Field living in a professional-class world where *people can still with a certain* (though diminishing) confidence draw up such career plans — and trying to legislate for people who have no such luck?

Frank Regan.
7 Howard Avenue,
Cheadle Hulme,
Cheshire SK8 6HH.

FRANK FIELD'S nightmarish vision of a world where we all have to invent a career plan and then pursue it without deviation had me rolling in the aisles. I would like to present him with my *job plan:*

I intend to have six children, thus contributing to the future labour force, over a period of 12 years (when I am between 30 and 42 years old). I wish to stay at home and bring them all up, sharing their childhoods instead of *dumping them with a paid* stranger.

When the youngest of my offspring is 18 and thus able to fend for itself, my aged mother and childless aunts will doubtless require my attention and care in their old age. By the time they no longer require my services, I shall be of pensionable age.

Bearing in mind that my husband will doubtless leave me for a slimmer, younger, not so domestically encumbered woman who will understand him better, how will Frank Field's brave new welfare system enable me to fulfil this job plan?

Jean Molloy.
25a Theodore Road,
London SE13 5TW.

I WOULD like to know how *low-paid workers are sup*posed to "put aside more of their income towards securing an adequate income in their old age" as they would be required to do under Frank Field's bizarre vision. The Labour Party can't even bring itself to commit to a *minimum wage of £4* per hour, which translates to a wage of £160 per week, £120 per week after tax and national insurance.

Where I live, rents are between £50-£70 per week, leaving a future minimum wager with £60 to spend on food, gas, *electric, water, clothes,* batteries, books, newspapers, etc, etc. Cinema and theatre-going is out of the question, and other cultural activities are considered unnecessary. Holidays are for those earning at least a third more than the minimum wage. Where then, with an inadequate income in one's youth, is an adequate income in old age to come from?

Anne O'Connor.
6 Kitto Road,
London SE14 5TW.

How Labour will judge the judges

HUGO YOUNG (No rest for the judges under Blair & Co, November 9) will not be dropped from my essential reading just because he claims that my recent lecture on judicial review was "reactionary." But I must set the record *straight.*

At the outset I paid tribute to the high quality of judicial review which "has so often rightly held the executive to account and improved the quality of administrative decision-making."

I did argue against "judi*cial supremacism" but em*phatically not in relation to any judicial review decision that any judge has ever made. I was criticising only statements made by a few judges in academic articles that, in some circumstances, the courts should be *free to strike down Acts of* Parliament. I disagree. Our democracy rests on the sovereignty of Parliament. In Hugo Young's free lexicon, it must be "reactionary" to uphold the sovereignty of Parliament.

This government has *abused power on a grand* scale. Ministers publicly vilify judges who have said "No" to their unlawful decisions. Hugo's vitals must have fallen grip to the deepest pessimism before he can predict the same of the next Labour government.

Not only will he be proved wrong; but, under Labour, judicial review, according to law and the independence of the judiciary, will, with*out question,* be upheld.

I have long advocated incorportion of the European Convention of Human Rights into our law. It is a Labour government which will have the confidence to invite a sovereign Parliament to endorse incorporation. That will significantly strengthen judicial review in human rights cases.

Lord Irvine of Lairg, QC
Shadow Lord Chancellor,
11 King's Bench Walk,
Temple,
London EC4Y 7EQ.

Come to the aid of Africa

CINDY SHINER is right to argue that the international community has failed to respond to the ongoing war and famine in Sierra Leone (Famine as rebel terror spreads, November 7). How*ever, I disagree with the impli*cation that all international aid agencies have ignored the crisis.

The death rate of 100 people per week in the famine-stricken town of Kenema stated in your article could only be applied to the month of July. Due to the combined efforts launched at the end of August by the five international aid agencies present in the area, the death-rate dropped by half within three weeks. By mid-October, mortality had dropped to a third of the catastrophic July figure.

As the main highway across the country remained impassable due to ambushes, MSF launched an airlift of food for children to Kenema at the end of August. To date 1,700 under-12-year-olds have been given therapeutic feeding in Kenema alone. Half of this number have now recovered enough to be included in the *next phase of treatment,* which will also take in moderately malnourished women who are either pregnant or lactating.

The results are encouraging but the situation is far from stable. Short of a miracle, such as a ceasefire, the only viable solution is a system of humanitarian convoys that can bring assistance to all parts of the country and to all those affected by the war, whether they are in government-held territory or behind rebel lines.

Phil Doherty.
Head of Mission,
Medecins Sans Frontieres,
Freetown,
Sierra Leone.

Sex helps the circulation

WELL, no, there's *nothing* wrong with female genitalia, but there are a number of reasons why the Guardian should not have printed Courbet's L'Origine Du Monde (November 7). Firstly it's in the long tradition of artists pandering to men of money and *property who view women as* possessions and sex aids.

Secondly, it's another regrettable example of the Guardian using sex as one of its weapons in the current circulation war. Last week's highlights were art as photographed through the window of a brothel (Friday Review, November 3); this week we have Courbet, sex shops and vibrators.

The use by the diary of sex *jokes that would* embarrass a saloon bar seems, thank heaven, to have finished.

Thirdly, we don't know the reasons for the upsurge in violence by youngsters. It is sensible to ask if it is connected with the exploitation of sex, which almost always involves the degradation of women by video, TV (what was the artistic need for the full-frontal *breast handling in The Final* Cut?), and print journalism.

The same day as the Courbet, you reported the trial of a 14-year-old boy who had indecently assaulted four 11- and 12-year olds and raped another. He said of his first double assault: "I got the idea *from watching a video."* Isn't some sort of restraint by the London media establishment worth trying?

Bill Moore.
Bradford Dale,
Youlgrave,
Derbyshire DE45 1WH.

An end to that Tory skulduggery

LAURENCE OTTER (Letters, November 8) alleged that "about 20 years ago" I "sparked off a smear campaign about leftist members of the Bermondsey Labour Party". He has now admitted *to me that he confused this* with Newham North-East. Nor could he identify any specific case of my describing CND as "in the pay of another nuclear power".

I also deny Simon Regan's charge of "skulduggery" in acquiring his abandoned Scallywag documents (Letters, November 8). I can confirm that his former landlords entirely reject his account and are currently suing the guarantors of his office *for substantial* unpaid rent. The documents were legitimately bought by Messrs Coles & Stevenson (solicitors) on my behalf on April *11 this* year from Messrs Beyer Singleton, certificated bailiffs. They yield fascinating insights into this despicable publication as well as its supporters.

Dr Julian Lewis.
Deputy Director,
Conservative Research Department,
32 Smith Square,
London SW1P 3HH.

Unions of Oz

MARTIN KETTLE'S report on Australia's Labour government (November 8) did not fully acknowledge the importance of the trade unions' role in Australia, which has been about much more than delivering pay restraint in return for the government delivering on the social wage.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions promoted union mergers and amalgamations, the restructuring of the award system which determines pay levels, and major initiatives on training and superannuation. The accord process has worked so well because the trade union movement was prepared to come up with imaginative policies to improve industrial competition, whilst seeking to protect and enhance working conditions and trade union organisation.

Nobody is saying that the acccord process could be replicated here, but the signs are that unions will have a broad and strategic agenda in any discussions with an incoming Labour government.

Patrick Quinn.
Branscombe,
Devon, EX12 3BHr

A Country Diary

LANGSETT: We leaned at 45 degrees into the south-west wind on the way down to Slippery Stones, arms outstretched and held up by the steady blast. It had been a grand day and now the sun was hitting the far-off hills, veiled by a yellow curtain of cloud — sure sign of rain to come. That magic time between daylight and darkness, colour draining from the moor-grass tussocks; Swaledale ewes and lambs barely distinguishable from the moundy hillslopes; the last grouse flight had passed, gone to heather-ground until dawn.

Going up Stainery Clough that morning had been rather like traversing a Gobelin tapestry, *all subtle bronze* and lemon yellow on the stunted oaks, plum on the dried heather banks, a glint of falling water where the trickle comes down from Morse Stone Spring. Then we were up on the gusty top of Morse Stone Naze above 1,700 feet. On the long, gentle way *down* Marden Moor there was a super view through crystal air, away to the white towers of the wind farm on Whitley Height with Emley Moor tower poking the sky behind, and the far-away cumulus piles *above Ferrybridge,* Eggborough and Drax power stations. Was that the blue bulk of York Minster in the mauve haze beyond?

Drifting down beside Far Cat Clough we were soon out of the south-westerly, putting up families of grouse as we went and wondering at the rich green braiding of mosses beside our rill. At the foot of the slope we crossed the peat-stained *Little Don and came* beside the ancient pens (still intact) from which thousands of sheep have been thrown through the gap into the water through several centuries. Now their own purpose is to shelter resting ramblers. The idiot protesters that burned *down the useful* wooden cabin lower down this clough did one good thing — the landowner subsequently restored the barn and shepherd's cot under Long Moor Edge and made them secure.

ROGER REDFERN

Muslim missionaries bring salvation to slammer

Darius Guppy is just the latest of hundreds of recent converts to Islam behind bars. MADELEINE BUNTING reports

THE Catholic chapel in Pentonville Prison in London used to be packed for every Sunday Mass. Some attributed this to the Holy Spirit, more worldly characters pointed out that in the days before radios were allowed, the canny priest incorporated the football results into the liturgy. Arsenal 1, Manchester 2. Chelsea 0, Leeds 1 . . . and now a reading from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

There is a curious link between doing time and religious faith. Reg Kray and one of his fellow gangsters, Chris Lambrianou, both became born-again Christians in prison, while a revival with dozens of dramatic conversions is allegedly sweeping through Lewes and Exeter prisons.

This week, it was the turn of Darius Guppy, the insurance swindler, to find consolation in belief, in his case in Islam. He joins distinguished brothers such as Mike Tyson and Malcolm X who both embraced the Koran whilst behind bars.

Guppy is not alone. An increasing number of inmates here are turning to Islam. An imam at Pentonville claims several hundred converts in the 10 years he has been working there. Just this week two prisoners at Wormwood Scrubs converted. Sheikh Saleh Janneh says at least 30 rediscovered their faith last year in Brixton. He now has about 50 attending Friday prayers in the converted Catholic chapel which now serves as a mosque.

Cynics put down the big attendances at services to an opportunity to trade drugs and tobacco, a chance to get out of the cell and vary the routine. Chaplains and imams would argue that prison offers a chance to concentrate on the big questions — whether life has a meaning and whether God exists. It provides a rare opportunity in our culture for solitude and silence. As the Anglican Chaplain General, David Fleming, says: "Locked away at night on their own with no television or pub, prisoners find a space in their life which many have never experienced before."

Every prison has an Anglican chaplain who meets each new inmate and questions them on their religious faith. Bibles, Korans and religious literature are widely available. The Prison Service reflects Britain's residual Christian value system with its core beliefs in repentance for the sinner, forgiveness and redemption. The reformed sinner has always been an important symbol for Christians, seen as proof of the transforming power of Christ. The born-again convict has become something of a fixture on the preaching circuit.

Less familiar is the idea of inmates becoming Muslims. Most people's knowledge of Islam extends no further than the prohibitions on alcohol and the stereotypes of fundamentalist fanatics. Few understand its appeal.

"We introduce them to Islam because it is full of hope," says Sheikh Janneh. "We want to infuse them with self-confidence about themselves. We don't approach them as criminals but as human beings and as such potential Muslims. All they need is contact with the Lord and to repent of their sins."

There is a similar emphasis on repentance in Islam as in Christianity. There is a belief that when you convert, you start again with a clean slate, said one British woman convert. But there are important differences which Sheikh Janneh believes add to the appeal of Islam, particularly for those disillusioned with Christianity.

First, there is no priestly hierarchy — you have a direct relationship with God and all believers are equal before him. The proliferation of scandals about priests has led to bitter disillusionment for some Christians, he points out.

Secondly, there is a simplicity about Islam. For example, when you decide to become a Muslim there is no complicated ritual, you simply have to make the Shahadah testimony privately or publicly. "There is only one God and Muhammed is his final Messenger."

Darius Guppy . . . a road-to-Mecca experience

Thirdly, there is no concept of original sin — you are responsible only for the actions you have committed yourself since puberty. Hence, there is less emphasis on the sinfulness of human nature and less play on guilt. Islam accepts that human beings are not perfect and imposes more realistic demands on its followers, he claims. There is no ideal of celibacy, which is seen as unnatural, as in Catholicism.

Bashir Khan of the Islamic Cultural Centre is closely involved in prison work: "In prison you ask yourself questions such as where did I go wrong, where did society fail me? Islam offers an alternative, a just way of life with its uncompromising morality."

Prisoners have failed and in searching to find out why, they recognise the corruption of a society which has misdirected them, he argues, adding that Christian churches have become very confused in their moral teaching. Convert Saba Risaluddin — though never an inmate — believes prisoners find the emphasis on social justice in Islam a powerful attraction.

"Christianity is very focused on the afterlife whereas Islam is about a more just social order. The Prophet's earliest converts were from the poor and the dispossessed."

Given Islam's reputation in the West, becoming a convert is perceived as the ultimate rebellion against post-Christian liberal capitalism. There were elements of this in the Million Man March in Washington last month. For prisoners angry at the hand society has dealt them, Islam can be both a rebellion and an ideology of empowerment.

See Letters opposite

The grumpy traveller's perfect companion

Paul Theroux can be relied upon to provide the jaundiced view — but is that really all there is to his writing? Photograph: MARTIN ARGLES

The MEGAN TRESIDDER INTERVIEW

PAUL THEROUX, the travel writer famous for his bad-tempered books about the world, points at his socks: nice, green, ribbed ones. "The last time I was interviewed over here, I had this dorky little guy — a real geek — asking me why I wasn't wearing any socks. I had just arrived from America where it had been warm. I think he was trying to do to me what he imagines I do to others, which is to point out their shortcomings in order to needle them."

Theroux is a prolific and varied author. He has written nearly 30 novels — including the acclaimed My Secret History and The Mosquito Coast — but it is the travel books, starting with The Great Railway Bazaar in 1975, which have made his name. He writes beautifully, about the "flutter-blast of someone snoring" in a hotel room, or Tibet's snowy mountains, looking as if "made out of starched and crushed bedsheets". But it is his ill-humour that people remember. His travel books are hugely popular but none of his readers would sensibly want to share a journey with him. Not that he is asking.

His new book, The Pillars Of Hercules, is a tour of the Mediterranean coast, covering the 2,000-mile shore from Gibraltar to Tel Aviv, by bus, train and ferry. It is vintage, pungent Theroux. He dismisses bullfighting ("Elaborate cultural explanations are made on behalf of bullfighting. I found them all laughable") and Spanish cooking ("undistinguished, unmemorable, regional"). Barcelona gets a thumbs-up but for dubious reasons: "People in Barcelona were apparently buying and reading my books. . ."

He is very funny and sometimes just lets the bizarre wash over him — being tutored in Australian slang by a Syrian in Aleppo, for example — but the overall impression is of someone spoiling for a fight. He gets lippy with a tour guide at Pompeii, who points out a large phallus drawn on a wall. "In America," Theroux tells him, "we would call that a small dick." And on a Spanish bus, he quarrels with an American tourist who has boasted that his wife had once been a Las Vegas showgirl. Theroux stops on his way off the bus: "Laughing a little, I said, 'Your husband tells me you were a Las Vegas showgirl. I would never have known.' The last sound I heard," he writes, "was this woman's howl ringing through the bus . . ."

We meet at an hotel in Knightsbridge. Theroux in the flesh is much milder than in print. He is 54, but with his glossy hair and preppy tortoiseshell glasses, he looks younger and reminds you of an American professor of English: a job he did in the sixties, teaching in Singapore and Malawi, where he went with the Peace Corps to avoid the Vietnam War draft. He was born in Boston but his accent has been softened by living for 17 years in England until 1991, when his marriage to a BBC journalist ended after 20 years and he moved to Hawaii. Theroux is civil, but not warm except about his own interests in bee-keeping and collecting erotic Japanese prints. (Pornography features heavily in his books.)

He is very guarded about his private life. He has two grown-up sons, both working over here in television. He now lives with someone he grudgingly admits is called Sheila, who works in public relations.

Public relations are not his strength. His books, he once said, are not up for debate. "Yeah, these people who buy your books," he says; ". . . it's their licence to bore, to bore you rigid. The worst don't even buy the book but buttonhole you because they are planning to go to Abu Dhabi and want to know whether they can drink the water." He is dismissive of bad reviews, too. "Bad reviews are usually a hate letter from an envious, often talentless hack."

He originally wanted to be a doctor but was diverted by writing. He grew up in a big Catholic family, the third of seven children. Two others also became writers but he does not think there was anything in the genes. "People do not become writers out of healthy literary impulse, but out of a deep loneliness, a deficiency, a kind of dysfunction . . . and on the positive side, they turn to books for solace. It's all sorts of things. It's conceit. It's signalling for attention. People who are normal don't become writers."

Theroux's father, whose own family were French Canadians, ran a leather business until it folded, when he became a shoe salesman. Theroux's mother is Italian which makes his reserve seem surprising but he explains she is northern Italian. "Not hysterical and demonstrative. Northern Italians tend to look down on southern Italians as ice-cream sellers, operatic, faintly annoying . . ." Perhaps it was this early lesson that encouraged his style of describing whole races in a few glib lines, calling Tongans, "lazy, mocking, quarrelsome" or claiming that all American Samoans are fat.

"All I said," he replies, "was that all the Samoans I have met are fat. It is the nature of writing to find texture, differences. But if you find differences in people's cultures, you're labelled as grumpy. It's welcome to the world of political correctness."

Theroux plays on his grumpy reputation throughout his book, but he says he is still surprised by reactions to his style.

"I think of my writing as good-tempered, humorous, forgiving on the whole. I have always been on pretty good terms with the human race. But you can't be on such good terms with it that you don't see it. When it's all forgiveness, there's no writing."

HE APPEARS to put Eric Newby in the category of over-forgiving travel writers, sending him up in his new book for having written enthusiastically about a restaurant in Nice. "Never catch me doing a thing like that, I was thinking, as I had my fish soup (quite pleasant), in a restaurant (fairly empty), all the while chatting to the proprietor (a big bore)." It is unfair of Theroux: Newby's enthusiasm manages to convey the foreignness of what he sees (and eats) and anyway how could Theroux know what Newby's meal was like?

"Just a joke, just a joke," he says, with an airy wave. "And there is this kind of travel writing in which everything is about enthusiasm, particularly in magazines. In a sense, everything I write is a reaction against that kind of writing. My first book was certainly a reaction to that. I thought, I don't want to see the sights in India. I don't want to see the Taj Mahal. I simply want to write about a trip, and about myself."

Theroux never takes a camera on his travels — "a camera robs me of my concentration". Nor does he actually enjoy discomfort or risk. On his Mediterranean trip, he avoids Algiers — "I didn't want to die" — and instead devotes a large and very funny section to a luxury two-week cruise. He always travels with a Swiss army knife, a torch, a shortwave radio and little leather notebooks. He fishes one out of his breastpocket and reads from his most recent jottings: a piece of graffiti he saw in Ecuador, protesting about the nuclear tests ("Better to have a Polynesian embrace than a French kiss") and a note about a notice he had seen in London: Keep The Royal Borough of Kensington Tidy — drink Coca-Cola. "That's Thatcher's Britain," he says. "Everything turned over to the advertisers."

Unlike America? "Surely you can afford to put up a little sign saying keep the country clean without having to get Coca-Cola to pay for it? It's much more subtle in America."

It is a perverse remark, typical of Theroux who is noticeably pro-American in his books. In The Kingdom By The Sea, he wrote: "The sun on Skye warmed the pines and the flowers and gave it the fragrance of Nantucket."

Why has Theroux never turned his merciless eye on America? "If I could think of a way of doing it, I'd do it. But I have to have an itinerary, an idea for a route, rather than just going from place to place, sniping away." He has considered a hitchhike through the States, "but I am cautioned by the example of Jack Kerouac who when he was about 50 or so, left New York and went to New Jersey, stuck his thumb out and couldn't get a ride all day. He was a grizzled looking man. He had to take the bus home."

Theroux, with his deceptively mild looks, would probably have better luck and you hope that he does, because of his shafts of wit and observation in between the sour words. And also because his perverse style only encourages you to visit whatever place he has just carpeted, to prove him wrong. In this sense he follows in the tradition of Evelyn Waugh, whom Theroux quotes approvingly, from his 1930 travel book, Labels.

"I do not think I shall ever forget the sight of Etna at sunset," Waugh wrote, "the mountain almost invisible in a blur of pastel grey . . . with the whole horizon behind radiant with pink light fading gently into a grey pastel sky. Nothing I have ever seen in Art or Nature was quite so revolting."

The Pillars Of Hercules is published by Hamish Hamilton, £17.50

British Midland
Diamond Deals
Return fares from London Heathrow.
Contact your local travel agent or call for details on
0345-554554
Diamond Deal fares available on selected dates and flights. Subject to availability. Travel must include a Saturday night stay. Passenger taxes will apply.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL meets the gentleman thief who stole £30 million from the rich and has hardly a penny left

Good burglar's guide to who's in and who's out

A GENTLEMAN thief, who claims to have stolen more than £30 million in jewels, furs, silver and paintings, pays tribute to the gossip columns of the Daily Mail and Daily Express as his information source to locate the "wealthy and the greedy". He claims that by studying the press he was able to work out who was in town, what jewels they had and who was staying in whose country home.

Peter Scott, now 64, hasn't permanently profited from his thefts. He lives in an Islington council flat, rides an old bicycle and works as a part-time tennis coach at Regent's Park. His autobiography, Gentleman Thief, published next week by HarperCollins, was "written in vanity, frequently in penance but not for gain — though a few quid wouldn't come amiss." It is a cautionary tale.

The press was an invaluable guide to those who were ostentatious about their belongings; also for photographs of country houses showing where loot was hung or stored. Scott claims to have stolen or attempted to steal the jewels of many celebrities: he stole Lauren Bacall's jewels in 1959 but handed them back to escape arrest.

A Daily Mail report that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were house guests at the Earl of Dudley's house in Buckinghamshire gave him the idea for another raid, when he managed to break into the house through an open window — but the police were alerted and he left empty-handed.

When he was trying to steal the jewels of Mrs Frank Sinatra — staying, with her husband, at the West End home of film producer Cubby Broccoli, he put a ladder against the side of the house but was seen by a group of press photographers who were trying to get a shot of Sinatra. They thought he was one of them — being a bit adventurous — and shouted at him to come down and not spoil it for everybody. He escaped.

He has less admiration for press reports of thefts: "The times I have seen newspapers describe 'Taters' [George 'Taters' Chatham, another thief and Scott's mentor] as a 'gang'! In recent years when he stole a Renoir and a Matisse in Mayfair I remember reading in the Times and Telegraph with amusement about an 'international art gang', when it was just George with a bit of wire."

The most famous robbery he claims is that of Sophia Loren's jewels when she was making The Millionairess in 1960. He broke into the actress's temporary home in Elstree and sneaked past her while she was greeting her husband Carlo Ponti. But she went on television and warned: "The thief will have no luck. I have cursed him." Scott, who spent 12 years in jail, says that her curse succeeded.

As a schoolboy at Belfast Royal Academy, one of Scott's prefects, who always warned him he would come to a bad end, was John Cole, the former BBC political correspondent.

Other criminals have also paid tribute to the press. Taters' Chatham used Tatler and Country Life as source material. Burglars agree the deaths columns in the Times are invaluable: for then a house may be empty for a while, everyone associated with it is likely to have their minds on other things at the time of the funeral and the burglar can enter uninterrupted.

Festival review

Brothers in Trouble

Dir: Udayan Prasad

THERE was a party yesterday celebrating the 10th anniversary of Stephen Frears's My Beautiful Laundrette. Appropriately enough, the London Festival today shows Udayan Prasad's Brothers In Trouble, another of the rare British films to be controversially centred round immigrants from the Indian sub-continent.

It took years for Robert Buckler, the writer and producer, to get the project off the ground, since a British film with a single white leading character still has less of a chance than most. But the bull point is, in fact, the excellent playing of the non-white cast, led by Om Puri, one of India's most celebrated actors.

Puri plays the leader of a group of illegal immigrants holed up in an old, semi-derelict house in the East End. Although a strict disciplinarian, he allows a prostitute into the sanctuary to keep his men happy but has a liaison himself with Angeline Ball's stray white girl. She almost becomes a mascot, and the men decide that it would no longer be right for the prostitute to call.

The nub of the story is what happens when she announces her pregnancy. But the film is not so much about sexual matters as about the state of mind of the illegals, particularly Pavan Malhotra's newcomer.

It may not be another My Beautiful Laundrette. But it would be a shame if this brave and very watchable film did not reach British screens before its TV screening.

☐ Today 3.30pm: Odeon West End (0171 928-3232)

Derek Malcolm

Reel talk

WHAT do critics know anyway? This ancient question was given yet another going over at this week's session in British Film Day, under the title Directors Vs Critics. That 'Vs' was a red herring, though, as all the panellists agreed that critics didn't have the power to make or break film-makers' careers. Besides, as British director Karl Francis maintained, "the audience is always right".

Critics' sincerity was in some doubt, though. Director Iain Softley told how everyone who'd interviewed him about his new film Hackers said how much they loved his last one, Backbeat. "But it didn't get as good reviews as they'd remembered giving it."

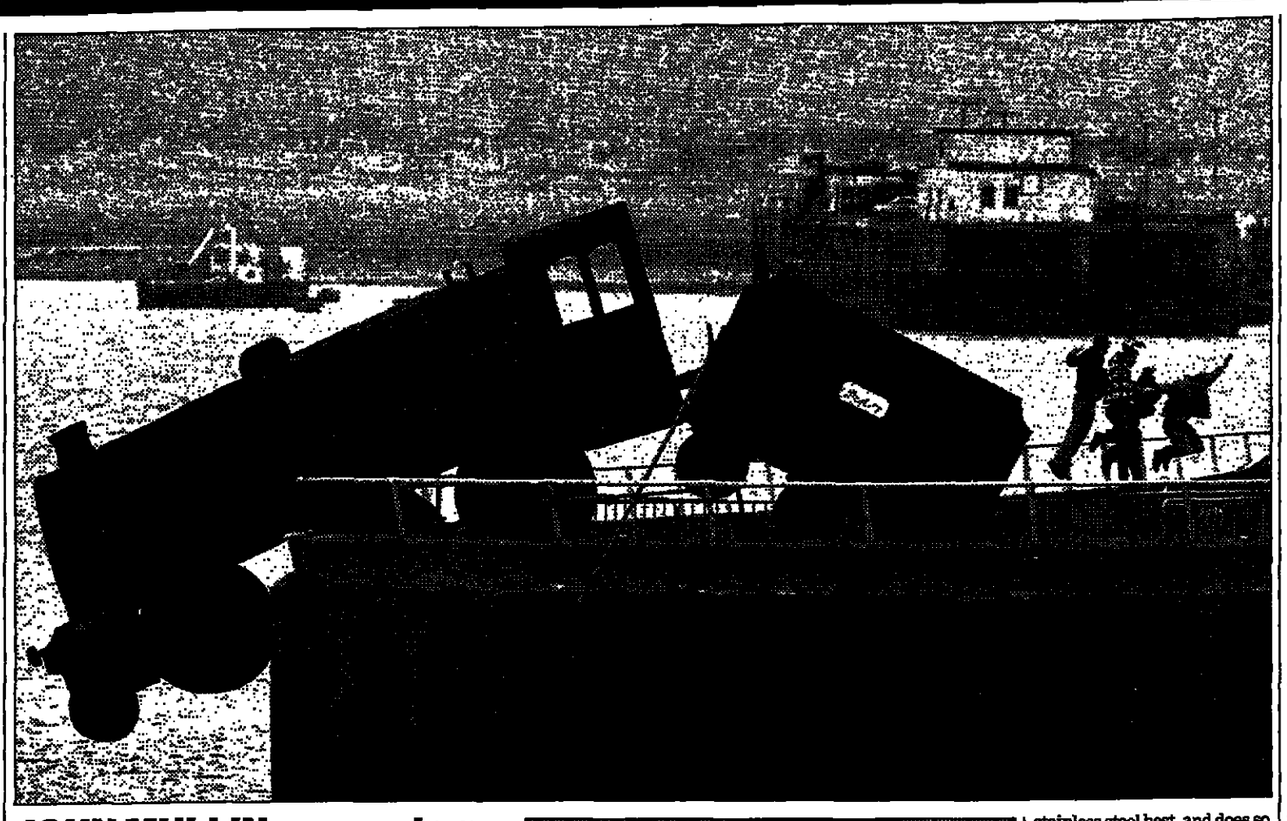
Still, Star critic Alan Frank reckoned he had been around enough British film sets to know a good director from a bad one. What did he call a bad director? came a question from the floor. Well, there was the foreign film-maker whose only contact with the crew was through an interpreter. The film was Fahrenheit 451, and the director? François Truffaut.

Jonathan Romney

Hot tips

Good Men Good Women (today, NFT1, 2.45pm) Taiwanese master Hou Hsiao Hsien presents his most challenging film yet, a complex multi-layered narrative about an actress. Uncompromising to say the least.

The Kingdom (today, ICA, 6pm). Deliriously inventive soap opera by Denmark's Lars Von Trier. Five hours of ER crossed with Twin Peaks.



JOHN MULLIN encounters George Wyllie, sculpture's jester with a purpose

Driving art off the rails

The train now diving . . . Wyllie's locomotive teeters on the brink of the drink in protest against rail service cuts, and its creator PHOTOGRAPHS: MURDO MacLEOD

DESPITE appearances, life has not always been a bed of roses for George Wyllie. It seems he has his regrets. True, they are few and his chuckle is never far away. But there is one memory he still finds painful: he once confiscated an accordion. It was more than 30 years ago, when he was working as a Customs man on the Irish border. But it still plays on his mind. "There's little enough music in the world as it is. I should have found some other way of ticking him off."

He gives a sad little shrug, and is lost in contemplation as he glances through the gloom across the breathtaking Clyde delta to Dunoon. His whirlwind chatter, sparking ideas off at tangents like a Catherine wheel, falls silent. But only for a moment.

Wyllie likes his fun. There is, in his fine philosophy, little point in doing anything, unless it can be done with a smile on the face. He prefers to appeal to punters than the art establishment and loves the unorthodox. His art is in the scam, and his fertile imagination.

He is 73 and came to art late. He was a sailor during the war, and visited Japan shortly after the US went nuclear to end it. He came back and became a Customs man, like Robert Burns and Adam Smith before him. And then, in his forties, he decided to give art a go. His work since reflects empathy for the underdog and a love of the quirky. He calls himself a "scul?tor", and the question mark is at the centre of all his work, figuratively and literally.

When his yacht-sized paper boat, which bemoaned the decline of the Clyde as a shipbuilding power, opened to reveal its power source up popped his question mark. Viewers at seven of the world's most famous ports got the message as the QM, parodying the Clyde-built Queen Mary, traversed the globe in 1990.

Ditto with his earlier straw locomotive, mourning the passing of the west of Scotland as an industrial power. It hung from a disused crane high over the Clyde for several weeks in 1987, and then was burned at an old railway yard. Inside the frame, inevitably, was Wyllie's trademark.

And then there was the locomotive he built to plunge into the drink at Fort William when the Western Line service was under threat this year. He did all that for next to nothing. "I know how to charge for commissions and where to make my money, but I just believed in it, and it was a high old time."

His artistic beginnings came when his wife, Daphne, fancied some paintings for the front room. They couldn't afford to buy any, but Wyllie found he had some talent.

"The question mark came soon after that. I never went to art school. I came across all this in late middle age. All those exhibitions, and buying and selling; I knew nothing about it. I was not very sure of myself.

"Nobody was being funny at the time. Everyone took themself too seriously. If I've made a contribution it's in slagging off artists. But it's like breaking ice in the polar ice-cap. If you don't keep breaking it, it keeps icing over.

> 'I can handle exhibitions and galleries. But it's like having a bath with your socks on'

"I was never really sure whether I was a sculptor or not. I was apprehensive, so I took the 'p' out and put the question mark in. I felt it was right. The question mark is at the centre of everything. Particularly because I am an artist dabbling in philosophical ideas. Questions are the most important, more important than answers."

His approach brought freedom. His work has been exhibited worldwide, and he is popular in the States, where his paper boat, which sails on the Origami Line, caused a particular stushie in New York. The English art establishment, notwithstanding a couple of fine commissions, is rather more circumspect. And it is something which bothers Wyllie not a jot.

"I can afford to do what I like at my age. I am not stuck with the system, and if I never did anything else in galleries, then it's OK by me. Norman Buchan, the old MP, called me the punters' sculptor. People stop me and say that was good. I like that.

"They still talk about the burning of the locomotive, and ask me whether it broke my heart. Not at all. How often does anyone ever see the Mona Lisa? But it's something that stays with you. It's the same with the locomotive.

"The electricity folk wanted me to do something for their nuclear plant at Torness, using all the old carbon rods. I quite fancied the idea, but they went off it when I showed them the plans. I had a health warning attached: 'Know the Conditions to Which You Aspire'. It was a double-edged thing, pointing out fossil fuels weren't everything people cracked them up to be. But I never got the commission in the end."

Wyllie was always bound for sculpting when he discovered art. As electrical artificer in the navy in the days when everything had to be patched up, he has always been good at making things. "I always made the best bogies (carts) at school." He likes working with stainless steel best, and does so every day. He has a place at his home in Gourock, looking across the Firth of Clyde to the Holy Loch. And one of his pals has a wee engineering works, which he uses for the bigger projects.

His home is packed with his own stuff. There are golden football boots with fancy laces, done for an exhibition in Singapore. There are his wally dug (porcelain dog) hesters in the conservatory, fully serviceable. Even the toilet has them: daft waistcoats with soaps in them like bullet cartridges, and framed toilet rolls in various stages of decay. It all means something: sometimes it's hard to know what.

Then there are steel birds in the front garden, and dozens of what he calls spires to the rear. The spire is, he says, an attempt to get back to nature's equilibrium. This is one of Wyllie's great themes: to strip away the hurly-burly dishonesty of modern life and get back to the incorruptible.

He went to every county in Ireland two years ago, collecting materials from each, and building 32 spires. He then exhibited them across a wee stream on the Irish border, between Counties Donegal and Londonderry: six in the north, the rest in the Republic. Two months later, the peace process was underway. It was the same story in eastern Europe. He built a massive Berlin Burd and it was placed to overlook the wall. A few months later, Germany was unified.

"It's important to get out of the gallery. That's the big battle. The art establishment doesn't seem to understand you can do things outside. I can handle exhibitions and galleries. But it's like having a bath with your socks on." But the physical effort is now beginning to get to him so he plans a foray into plays.

He has already written songs: one is a favourite at his various lectures, and is called The Great Bum Steer. It's about finding truth behind orthodoxy, and how all those philosophers whose names peppered his conversation did so. With a cough of self-deprecation, he even lines himself alongside Aristotle, Galileo and Socrates in that quest.

Stargap is the new plan. "It's about how, as the manufacturing process is perfected, lots of people jump in to fill the gap and do all sorts of useless stuff: ad men, consultants. I haven't been able to tie it down yet. But I'm clearing the decks to give it a go. It's much easier than sculpting. And it'll be a good laugh."

The grapes of froth

Television

Stuart Jeffries

AND ALL this so that Michael Schumacher can spray Damon Hill in the face after winning a grand prix. All these riches because our vocabulary of celebration is so impoverished.

One hundred feet beneath the French town of Epernay are 65 miles of tunnels filled with one billion fermenting bottles of champagne, patrolled by workers in damp clothes. "We live in a hole in the ground like rats," said one, complaining bitterly of the risks of chills and rheumatism.

It's their job to shuffle each bottle round in a process called remuage, moving sediment to the top of the neck. In California they have computerised machines that do this, huge crates called gyropalettes that swivel regularly to dislodge the dead yeast, which is then removed from the bottles. But not in France, oh no. State of the art nuclear tests in the South Pacific, perhaps, but it is part of the mystique of champagne production that the twiddling hands of the champagne miners are fundamental to its image, if not its taste.

This has been the story told in many of the parts of **Jancis Robinson's Wine Course** (BBC2), which concluded last night with a pop at the sparkling wine industry: snooty French winemakers sneering at the rest of the world's efforts to emulate them. It has been a story that has grown tedious in its almost weekly retelling. This hasn't so much been an education in wine as a study of national insecurity and misplaced arrogance.

It was only in Grapes And Gas that Robinson lost patience with this. It wasn't the bubbles that got up her nose, rather the fact that champagne makers were "selling the world an illusion, the illusion that champagne is by definition special, by keeping prices high and by associating champagne strictly with success and glamour they've managed to convince the world that it's so much more than other fizz — mere sparkling wines."

Champagne makers, naturally enough, don't seem to believe this. Comte Ghislain De Vogüé, a director of Moët and Chandon who helped set up sparkling wine production in California to the horror of more conservative champagne makers, claimed that he enjoyed sparkling wines whatever their provenance. He announced: "I never compare a redhead girl, a blonde girl and a brunette. If the three of them are pretty I like them all." "A very French response," said Jancis, starting to look uncomfortable. "I don't know what you mean exactly," said the comte, but the rest of us did: he'd just won this week's Jacques Chirac Award for International Diplomacy.

The champenois are, in any case, a very different strain of wine producers from the rest of the French. Usually, labels are filled with edifying information about the soil, and makers are only too pleased to discuss the proportions of different grapes and how the wine is made. Champagne is made from a mixture of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Meunier grapes — but until recently, the proportions have been none of your business, sunshine.

That was until Richard Geoffroy blabbed the secrets when he tried to lift Moët and Chandon out of the nineties recession: his labels now tell drinkers exactly what is in the bottle, and how old the wine is. He was one of those jet-setters of the wine-producing world that Robinson has seized on throughout the series to dramatise her story. If there was a moral, it was, hey big spenders! don't pop your cork for every champagne you see. In Robinson's view, many sparkling wines which say on the label that they are made by the "traditional method" are "better value and more reliable than champagne."

The series hasn't been very educational about wine — although its accompanying book is — but rather a pleasant travelogue, which has allowed Robinson to disport herself in some of the poncliest salons in France and some of the most expensive hillsides in the world. And they call it work.

RICHARD WILLIAMS tunes in to Ornette Coleman's Prime Time

Sax exile

WITH three dancers, a female rapper, nine musicians, and two video cameramen roaming the stage sending live images to two giant screens and half a dozen small monitors, Ornette Coleman's Prime Time on the South Bank in 1995 was a very long way indeed from the spare-framed music of Coleman's quartet at New York's Five Spot Café in 1960, which ignited the fuse of the jazz avant-garde.

At 65, Coleman is still in search of fresh ears and minds. The inescapable comparison is with Miles Davis, another whose inner momentum drove him to use up audiences almost as fast as he changed sidemen. But it is questionable whether Prime Time, the amplified band which he formed in the mid-Seventies, has done him any favours.

Its internal evolution has seen the music grow away from collective improvisations in the semi-private language of "harmolodics" to a more expansive approach which this week featured unashamed pastiches of such listener-friendly genres as calypso, high-life, soca, hip-hop and funk, mostly cut into five-minute chunks. Two guitars, two basses (one electric, one acoustic), a kit drummer (Coleman's son Denardo, also deploying computer pads), a tabla drummer (the redoubtable Badal Roy), a keyboardist and a trumpeter (the British all-rounder Guy Barker, making a guest appearance that he will never forget) created a dense weave of sound in which the individual constituents were less important than the overall momentum.

The sheer density does no favours to Coleman's lovely tunes, but an even bigger casualty is his own playing, which is restricted both by the density of the backgrounds and by rhythmic and harmonic elements so static as to deprive him of real stimulus. He gets both too much information, and too little. From time to time that crying alto saxophone tone pierced the murk, and once or twice he showed that he can still shape a lament with wonderful poise, but mostly he was confined to a small set of his own clichés — a strange fate for such an original thinker.

The best thing about Wednesday's Festival Hall concert was the informal arts-labbish ambiance created by the use of other media. But even then there were too many causes of dissatisfaction. What, for instance, is the point of having a rapper if no one can hear a word she says?

LYN GARDNER chases Mack and Mabel

Golden days of silents

WHEN Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart's Mack And Mabel flopped on Broadway in 1974 everyone said that the creators of Hello Dolly had lost their golden touch. But in the intervening years, this biomusical about Mack Sennett, creator of the Keystone Kops, and his silent screen star Mabie Normand has acquired an almost legendary status

In truth, in Paul Kerryson's sprightly production, Mack And Mabel comes across as a mild mannered, mildly entertaining, mildly old-fashioned piece of fluff with a couple of memorable tunes (I Won't Send Roses; When Mabel Comes In The Room) and one sensational, showstopping dance sequence in the 42nd Street mould: Tap Your Troubles Away. What the show needs is at least another half dozen such feel-good, feed-your-fantasies moments.

Part of the problem is the rather intractable nature of Sennett, a self-obsessed bully who constantly justifies his singular lack of feeling for others in general and Mabel in particular because he can't stop "running". Quite why is never satisfactorily explained and regrettably, like Rail-track trains, he never seems to arrive. He is bravely played by Howard McGillin with a square-jawed charmlessness.

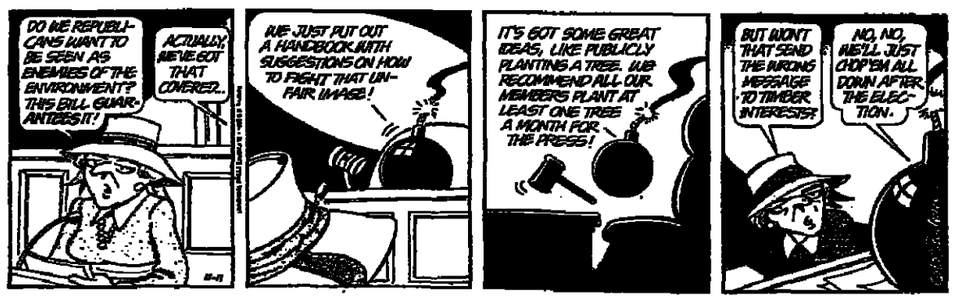
As Mabel, Caroline O'Connor has a far easier task and she imbues "the Nelly from the delly" who went on to become the world-famous custard pie throwing comedienne with a kooky, gamine appeal. There are good supporting performances from Kathryn Evans as the game, ever loyal Lottie and Philip Herbert as a Fatty Arbuckle. But the best fun comes from the re-creation of silent movie set pieces, from the archetypal heist in the laundry ("bring out the safe or I wring out the waif") to an ingeniously conceived Keystone Kops chase.

The show ends in 1929. In reality by this state Normand, her health ruined by drink and drugs and her career ruined by scandal, was dying of tubercolosis. Such harsh realities doesn't suit the rose-tinted marshmallow world of musicals. So, in a change to the original Broadway show Mabel is re-united with her Mack. "I promise you a happy ending," they trill. It's that kind of evening.

☐ At the Piccadilly, London (0171 369-1734)

Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



theObserver

'I'm proud to say I've made a career out of being trivial. I think it's an art form'

From this Sunday, Janet Street-Porter's new fortnightly column in the Review

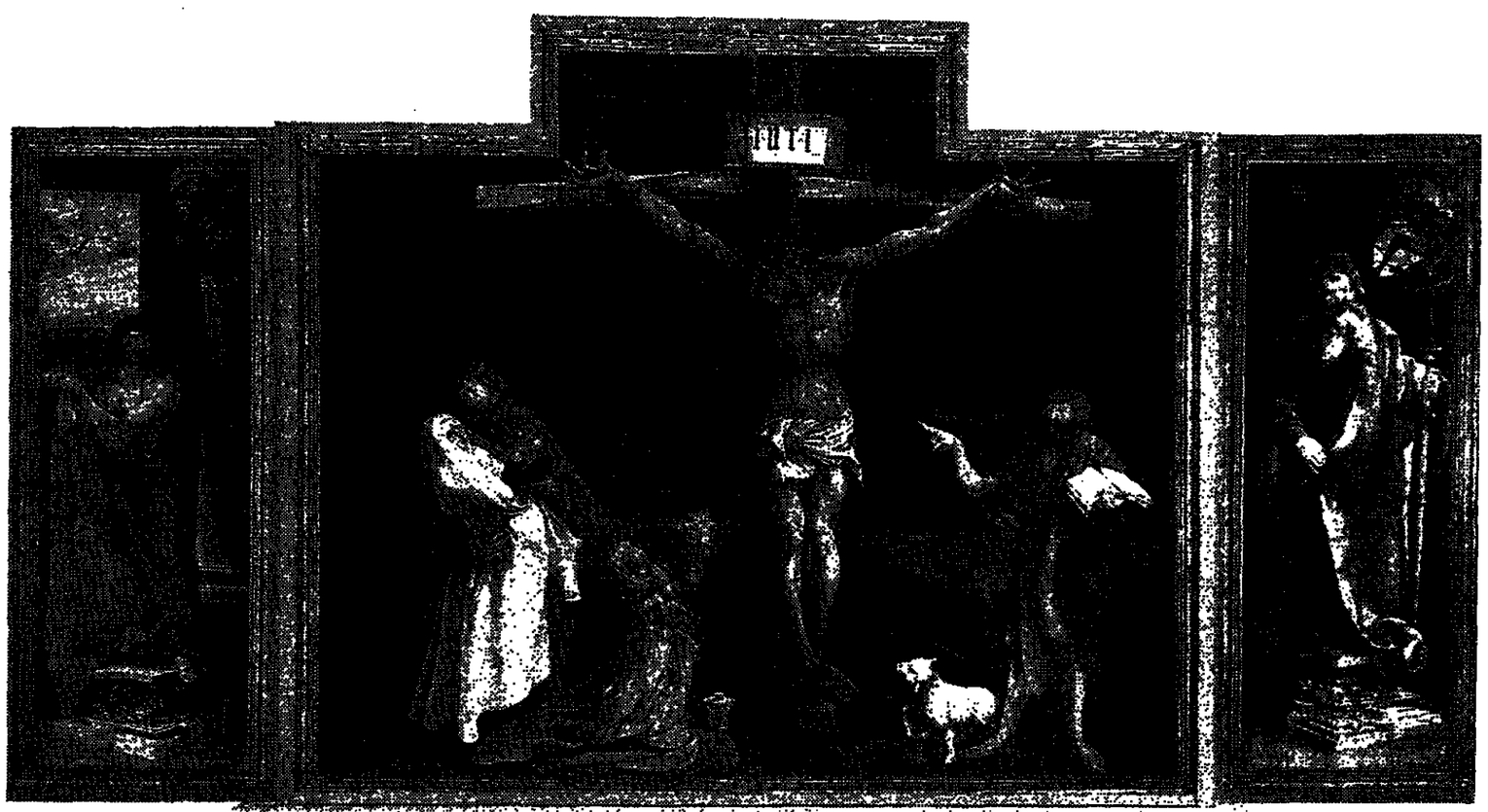
In 1954 there were four armed robberies in London.

In 1994 there were four armed robberies in London every day.

Read the explosive truth about the capital's organised crime-wave in this week's Time Out.

Time Out

The devil take the Hindemith



The Crucifixion and the Deposition: the Isenheim Altarpiece by Matthias Grünewald (1455-1528)
BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

With the great Isenheim altarpiece (above) as background, and writing when the Nazis had banned his works, Paul Hindemith wrote an opera about the artist in society. PETER SELLARS, whose production opens next week, explains why it still has political resonance today

PAUL Hindemith was one of the most engaged composers who ever lived. His insistence that music was a public activity, that it was not for a small privileged elite but that it should be available in every sector of society, was followed through with enormous zeal.

He spent years and years working with the greatest musicians alive, with the Fürtwanglers and the Klemperers, yet he also worked in and composed for workers' clubs and schools. Throughout his life his sense of the artist's public commitment was very profound, and all three of his large-scale operas — *Cardillac* (1926), *Mathis Der Maler* (1934-35) and *Die Harmonie Der Welt* (1956-57) — deal in one way or another with the position of the artist in society.

Cardillac deals with the commodification of art in terms that are quite horrifying; under those circumstances the artist becomes not only a parasite but a menace to society, which is quite an extreme point of view.

Mathis Der Maler treats that theme positively, and focuses on an artist, Matthias Grünewald, who was working in the German High Renaissance, before art was a commodity and when painters didn't sign their pictures. It was the time of the first generation who did begin to sign their work; but Grünewald was still not part of that. Dürer was busy signing everything and dating it, but Grünewald was living a very different life.

It's almost as if he was a homeless person: we don't know anything about him, where he was born or really where he died. Compared to Dürer or Cranach or any number of his contemporaries of whose lives we have minute details Grünewald might as well not even have existed.

He didn't work at any of the major courts, and his masterpiece, the Isenheim Altarpiece, was made for the St Anthony's Hospice, a home for the incurable. You went there to pray and to die, and the altarpiece was designed as an instrument of healing — not for a wealthy patron, who could see himself painted next to Christ.

For me that is enshrined in the first scene of Hindemith's opera where the message to the artist is that you must feed people and bind their wounds; the composer makes that the first thing Mathis must confront. That's the purpose of art — to give people a kind of nutriment, a kind of consolation and assistance in living their lives.

Hindemith would never have said that kind of thing in an interview, he was such a buttoned-up public persona. But his music comes out in quite another way, filled with yearning and infinite patience with the tiny details. In the work itself Hindemith shows a craftmanship that is medieval in its detail, so immaculate that the audience could never be aware of it all.

The time that Hindemith spent on Grünewald inevitably left its mark, and he must have found profound solace — at a time in the mid-1930s when his own music had been proscribed by the Nazis and wasn't played in his own country — in the sense that that which is not heard will still matter.

Rafael Kubelik's 1968 recording has just been reissued, and the CD booklet contains Hindemith's shocking little screed which he published at the time of the first performance in 1938. We are opening this production on the day of his centenary and I don't want to do something, which is against Paul Hindemith. But it has been interesting for me to be working on *Mathis Der Maler* straight after Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and with Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* very much in the air at the moment with Peter Stein's production last month in Amsterdam and another new staging opening at the Paris Châtelet this week.

All three were then cold-war composers, writing their works in a period before the second world war when everyone was polarised and forced into taking an extreme position. So if Stravinsky has to be good then Schoenberg must be evil; Hindemith has to claim that his harmonic system is pure and therefore Schoenberg's harmonic system must be polluted. In that climate everyone has to present themselves as perhaps not what they are, for they cannot deal with the most important questions about the psychology and the suffering of exile — what does it mean when your works are really outlawed in your country, what actually is the emotional toll it takes of a composer?

Of course none of them would ever have admitted it, but such feelings must have coloured the public pronouncements of all three composers. Stravinsky's aggressive self-aggrandisement was surely because he knew he had no solid ground under him.

As soon as he left Russia for good in 1914, and after his pieces had been removed from active consideration in Russia, Stravinsky himself became an Oedipus figure, someone who could come to a foreign country (Switzerland first in his case, and then France), not admitting where he came from, and who could announce himself as brilliant, able to solve every riddle, a dazzlingly famous presence but one who of course is completely hiding all of his origins. So killing your father in order to be here today was an image for Stravinsky that was so pointed.

He gave interview after interview at the time of the premiere of *Oedipus Rex* saying that of course he had just picked it almost at random as a Greek play just because he liked the way the syllables worked and that everything about it was purely abstract, without real subject matter. But in fact it's the most autobiographical subject imaginable.

In the same way *Mathis der Maler* is a profoundly autobiographical piece; so is Schoenberg's *Moses*. Both composers were in a situation in which they couldn't begin to admit to that level of autobiography and go out every day in public. Hindemith was still in Germany at that time (he eventually left in 1938, going first to Switzerland, where the first performance of Mathis took place, and eventually settling in the US).

His pieces weren't played, and he had been declared a public enemy, but he was still there — how much could he admit of what was in this piece? How much does he have to allow his music to say it for him and make sure his public pronouncements wouldn't fall foul of Hitler, or say anything that would disturb Goebbels?

The result is those sanctimonious *pronunciamentos*, such as "Well of course like Bach all true progressives are in fact deeply conservative", and other bizarre comments that are just sad, but have to be viewed in context. I feel the same about Stravinsky and Schoenberg: that they were lost souls, truly deracinated, and had no place.

So I tend to look at *Mathis Der Maler* rather than Hindemith's published commentaries, because it has far more substance. I'm very moved by working on this piece, when I imagine the circumstances in which it was written. It is so much more adventurous, so much more daring and colourful, than the platitudes that Hindemith claimed for it in his public statements for years and years.

Even when he was settled in the US he continued the same line; when the Metropolitan Opera approached him with the idea of a production of *Mathis* he turned it down, saying it was "not a good time" for the opera to be seen — what other composer would have turned down the chance of having his opera staged at the Met?

Then there is the testimony of a conductor who was one of Hindemith's assistants for a production in the late 1950s. Hindemith understood that cuts had to be made in the musical score but he was insistent that not one bit of staging be altered from his very precise indications. *Mathis Der Maler* had to be set in the German high renaissance during the peasant wars, with every wimple in place, and a giant reproduction of the Isenheim altarpiece on stage (which is a side show, a detour that has nothing to do with the piece).

That is so shocking — most composers will say that whatever you do, don't touch the music, but Hindemith was willing to sacrifice the music. Yet he insisted that the opera had nothing to do with our time in order to keep the spectre of autobiography at bay. If ever there had been a production that acknowledged the 1930s then the entire autobiographical element would come to the fore and he just could not have coped with that.

So working with this piece means having to cut through various layers of disinformation. What we are putting on stage is Grünewald several times digested; we're responding to Grünewald, of course — our task is to enter into dialogue with him. The image of the desert fathers really is the undercurrent of the entire piece, the idea of what it means to secede from the world, the idea of living one's life in such a way that nobody has to be hurt every day for one to be alive, and to do that you have go to the desert right now.

Everything we touch in our first world is only here because someone has been denied a life in the third world, our department store bargains are here becaüse someone is working 18 hours a day in a firetrap in Hong Kong or Singapore. What I always tell the performers in rehearsal is that Henry Kissinger gets the Nobel prize for world peace, and a Buddhist monk in a cave in Nepal spends his life praying for world peace: now who is doing more for world peace?

I've been asking opera companies to let me do *Mathis der Maler* for 10 years. As soon as the ultra-right senator Jesse Helms began to make his attacks on the arts in the USA that was the response I wanted to make, and it's the response I want to make at this moment in America when we're so under fire.

What the US Congress was doing every day throughout the summer is comparable to February and March 1933, and to what happened in the Reichstag. The law against overcrowding the schools was proposed by Hitler in 1933 to say that the quality of education could not be sustained with these foreigners and mixed race people. The voters in California passed proposition 187 that denies healthcare, emergency medical treatment and education to children of illegal immigrants. That's passed now, it's law. In the United States of America, the Land of the Free.

The voters of California have gone one step past that, and the US Congress has passed a law forbidding any non-profit organisation which gets government money from engaging in political activity. That means legal aid organisations for the poor cannot engage in political activity.

Meanwhile a profit-making organisation like a defence corporation is permitted to engage in political activity. This is sick. Day-to-day we're watching these attacks, these clampdowns, and these proto-fascist movements are not figments of the imagination. Everyone asks why the German people didn't protest in the 1930s. We have the same question in the US right now.

Why is there not a protest? Why did the Governor of California, Pete Wilson, prepare his national presidential bid on the basis of immigrant management? That's what's going on now. For me, it is not a forced situation.

For me to deal with what Hindemith was feeling day-to-day in 1933 and 1934 is very real, and this opera is responding to a real need. I love Hindemith and this has long been one of my favourite pieces, but I think it has a purpose right now, and has a contribution to make at this moment in our history.

Peter Sellars was in conversation with the Guardian's chief music critic, Andrew Clements. Mathis Der Maler, which is his debut production at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, opens on Thursday, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen

Born in Pittsburgh in 1957, Peter Sellars established his reputation as one of the most inventive and challenging of contemporary theatre directors in the 1980s with a series of radically updated opera productions, most famously a trilogy of Mozart's Da Ponte operas translated to specific contemporary American settings. He made his British operatic debut at Glyndebourne in 1987. His Merchant of Venice was seen at the Barbican earlier this year

Been everywhere, seen nothing

RICHARD BOSTON, after visiting the Cezanne exhibition in Paris, finds the Simon Jenkins school of blockbuster art tourism bad for the soul

A RECENT article by Simon Jenkins in the Spectator begins: "I have scaled the Matterhorn of art tourism. I have done the Paris Cezanne." The Paris Cezanne means the very large exhibition currently at the Grand Palais in Paris (coming to the Tate in February, and thence to Philadelphia).

It is not clear why for Jenkins visiting an exhibition is like climbing a mountain, and why the Cezanne exhibition is like the Matterhorn rather than Mount Fuji or, more obviously, the Montagne Sainte-Victoire, the subject of so many of Cezanne's pictures.

But note the word "done". A collection of some of the greatest paintings in European art is something that Jenkins "does", for Jenkins is an "art tourist". The art tourist "does" an exhibition because it is there: going is like slapping another label on the luggage, evidence that a Jenkins has been here, done that. It is not Cezanne that is of interest but Jenkins.

Jenkins does continue with some facetiousness, whereby he seems to be signalling that he may not be being totally serious, that he may indeed be attempting humour. He says that tickets to the Paris show are of "Pavarotti-ish desirability", that ambassadors are plagued for them, hostesses die for them. Well, perhaps, but it is quite unnecessary. Jenkins rightly says that in the mornings the exhibition is open only to those with pre-booked reservations. He says these are booked until Christmas.

I don't know about that. I went in the afternoons when tickets are unreserved. I went three afternoons running and didn't have to queue for more than a few minutes. My visits were on weekdays. Perhaps it is more crowded at weekends.

By hugely overstating the difficulty of getting in, Jenkins may deter some people and thereby they will miss a richly rewarding experience.

Where Jenkins's article has a certain negative merit is in showing why so many people go to these huge exhibitions. They go so they can say they've been. My own excuse for going to the Cezanne exhibition three days running is that I am writing a book which is mostly about Cezanne.

I can't say I particularly enjoyed the exhibition. On my first visit I was so overwhelmed by its size that I found myself going through the rooms faster and faster till I thought I might have a panic attack. Before my second visit I studied the catalogue in detail. Then I made my way to particular pictures and looked at them at length. I find it increasingly difficult to look at more than half a dozen pictures in one session and here there are hundreds.

It is often said that we live in a golden age of exhibitions. Just this year, just in London, there have been (off the top of my head) Poussin, Michelangelo, Spanish Still Life, Yves Klein, de Kooning, Manet to Gauguin, Landscapes of France-Impressionism and its rivals, and the Art of Africa. Out of all these I have a really sharp memory of not a very great many pictures.

Even that many is enough to be grateful for, but it could have been supplied more economically. The big museums and the big exhibitions are self-defeating. The situation is now such that the bigger the show the less you see. This is partly because the crowds can be so thick that they form a physical barrier between you and the pictures.

And there is also the indigestibility. There's just too much to take in, and pictures are not meant to be looked at like this, wholesale. Cezanne didn't intend his pictures to be looked at hundreds at a time. Paintings should be looked at as they were painted, singly.

The National Gallery is still a refreshing oasis of calm in the hectic museum world. Although stuffed with masterpieces it somehow, magically, preserves a sense of intimacy. No fear of a panic attack here, or in (comparatively) small museums like the Ashmolean in Oxford, which I think is my favourite. More and more I like provincial museums. If they only contain three or four crackers, that's more than enough: it's a feast.

What is really needed is not more blockbuster exhibitions but precisely the opposite. That is to say, a policy of dispersal from the huge centralised collections of the capital where only a tiny proportion is ever on display at any one time. Send them out of London.

And why shouldn't they go to colleges, schools, hospitals, factories? Then they could do some useful work instead of being just ticked off on some Jenkinsite art tourist's checklist.

Disneyland® Paris
4 DAYS FOR £44
PER PERSON PER DAY*
■ Holidays include breakfast and 4 day Theme Park Passes
■ Great prices also available for holidays by Air & Eurostar
*When staying at Disney's Hotel Santa Fe for 3 nights on self drive holidays. Prices based on 2 people in a room for Sun-Wed arrivals before 20th Dec '95.
PHONE TODAY OR SEE YOUR LOCAL ABTA TRAVEL AGENT
01992 456 100
Paris Travel Service
Bridge House, 55-59 High Road, Broxbourne, Herts. EN10 7DT
ABTA V3658

The Guardian Saturday November 11 1995

Ken Saro-Wiwa

The death of a writer

IT IS a supreme irony that the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian environmental activist, businessman and writer at the age of 54, should have come in such a grotesque manner: tried and condemned by a tribunal instead of an ordinary court of law, denied the right of appeal, and hanged. Nothing about his origins nor, indeed, the course of most of his life, indicated even remotely that things would come to this terrible pass.

Saro-Wiwa was born in Bori, near Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State in Nigeria. He was a brilliant student and government scholarships saw him through Government College, Umuahia, and the University of Ibadan — two famous institutions which some other notable Nigerian writers, including Chinua Achebe, had also attended.

He taught briefly at the Universities of Ibadan and Nigeria (at Nsukka) before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967. Stridently anti-Biafran (until his death he wrote the name with a lower case "b"), Saro-Wiwa pitched his camp with the Federal authorities. He was appointed the administrator of the oil port of Bonny, and in 1968 became one of the first cabinet members in the newly created Rivers State, where he alternately held the powerful portfolios of education and information. However, when he left the cabinet of Commander Alfred Dietee-Spiff, the military governor of Rivers State, in 1973, it was in acrimonious circumstances.

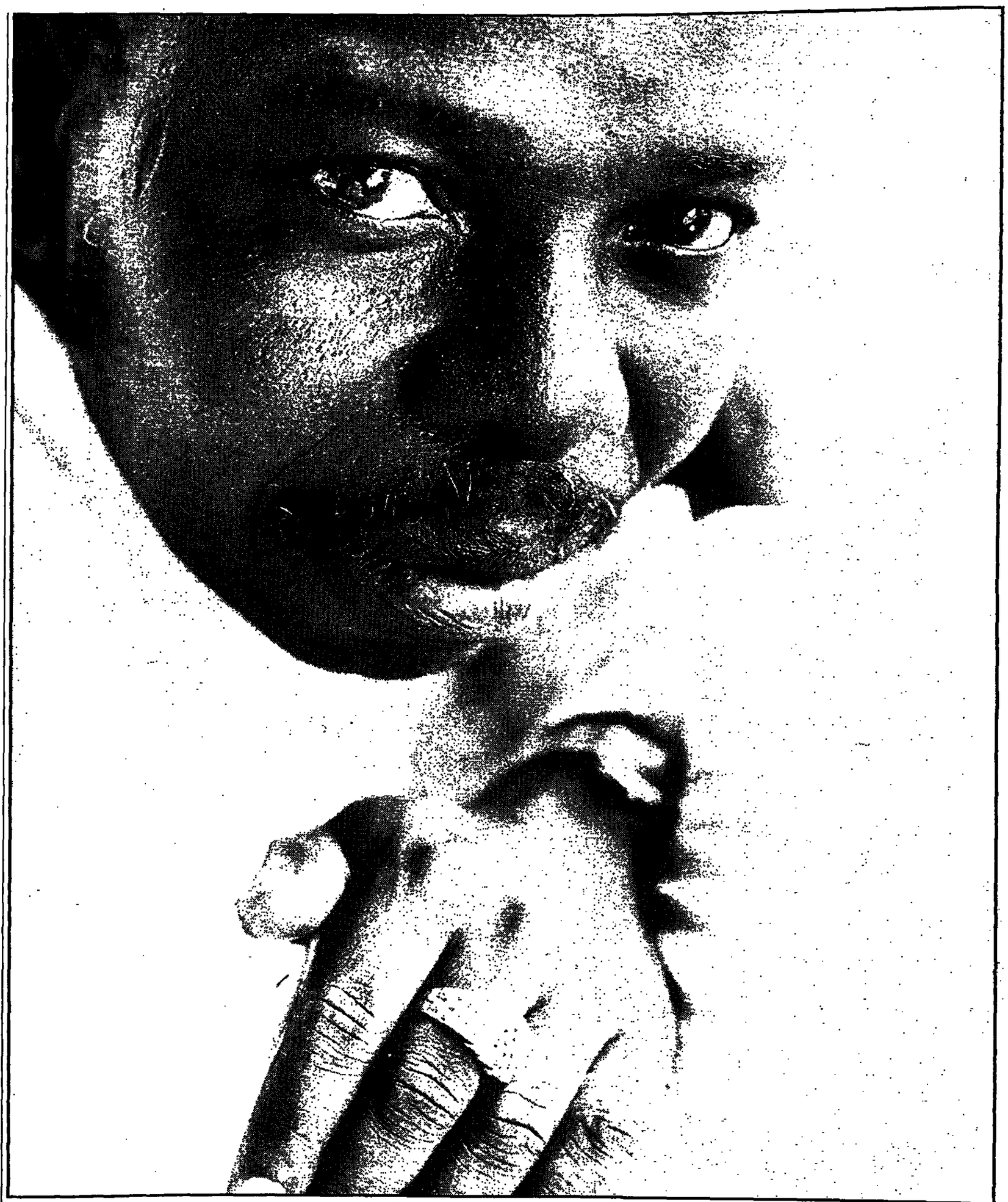
Out of government, Saro-Wiwa turned to business, which he ran alongside his real love of writing. He made good on both scores. He could afford to send his son to Eton; and had to his credit more than 20 titles in all genres of literature.

Four years ago Saro-Wiwa decided to abandon everything and devote himself exclusively to the Ogoni struggle

There are four novels, a poetry volume, two books of short stories, three titles on general topics, two drama volumes, one on folklore and nine children's books. And this output does not include the extensive pamphleteering on behalf of the Ogoni cause. His Tambari and Tambari In Dukana, both written for children, were published by Longman. All the others are published by his Saros International Publishers. Last year, Longman re-issued his Sazaboy: A Novel In Rotten English, which received an honourable mention at the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa. Only last month the same publishers re-issued A Forest Of Flowers, his first collection of short stories which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1987.

Saro-Wiwa was also at different times an engaging newspaper columnist for Punch, Vanguard and the Daily Times, all Lagos-based dailies. Whether in journalism or in creative writing, he exposed a nation "cracking up under the pressures of maladministration, corporate greed, sloth, ignorance and mercenary self-interest, while its people struggle against government neglect and abuse, racketeering, poverty, disease, superstition and ethnic mistrust" to quote the apposite comment on the blurb accompanying A Forest Of Flowers.

Sometime in 1991, Saro-Wiwa decided to abandon "everything" and devote himself to the Ogoni struggle, which until then he had combined with his other activities. He put his creative writing in abeyance, dutifully returning to their owners all the manuscripts his Saros International was to have published, and relinquished his position as president of the Association of Nigerian Authors which he had held for three years.



Saro-Wiwa . . . a friend asked if it was not possible for him to 'go slow' on 'the struggle'. He merely smiled and changed the topic

PHOTOGRAPH: TIM STOCKHILL/REX

Towards the end of 1992 he was struck by tragedy when his son at Eton dropped dead during a game of rugby. Something inside Saro-Wiwa seemed to have died as a result. From then on he lived only for the Ogoni struggle.

Before long he complained that the military authorities had turned a deaf ear to the demands of his people. In the circumstances, he said the only option left was to attract the attention of the international community. In July 1992 he addressed the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva and followed this up with a visit to the UN in New York. He bought cine equipment and cameras, and systematically began recording scenes of oil pollution and gas flaring in Ogoniland. Using the platform of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which he helped found, he sensitised his people to both the politics and economics of oil.

Greenpeace and other environmental groups soon took up the Ogoni case and the picketing of Shell offices in London became commonplace. (In fact, Shell was chased out of Ogoniland in 1993.) Saro-Wiwa had become an acute embarrassment to oil companies operating in Nigeria and to his country's military rulers.

During his last visit to London in May last year he complained that Shell had put a worldwide surveillance on his movements. He said it was obvious that the military regime in Nigeria was feeling the heat of the Ogoni struggle. "I am using even the Koran which says it is right to fight one's oppressors against them", he told me. "And they don't like it one bit." A mutual friend, a novelist, asked Saro-Wiwa if it was not possible for him to "go slow" on "the struggle". The man merely smiled and changed the topic.

Somebody wanted to know the meaning of Saro-Wiwa's death. Simple. It means that nothing has changed

The last time I saw him was when the UK chapter of the Ogoni movement was launched at the Royal Park Hotel in London. Saro-Wiwa told me he would return to Nigeria the following week, but would be back in good time for the launch of Sozaboy by Longman. He never came back.

Shortly after his return to Nigeria he was arrested and charged with multiple murder although it was established that he was not at the scene of the killings. But Justice Ibrahim Auta, the tribunal chairman, warned: "If an accused was not directly involved in a crime, he could still be convicted if he encouraged the act". And the tribunal is empowered to pronounce only capital punishment.

So, the Nigerian state has killed Ken Saro-Wiwa. The man I knew, the one who was my friend for over a decade, believed in combat — the combat of the written and spoken word. If he opposed anything, he went to great lengths to leave nobody in doubt as to where he stood. Perhaps his eternal mistake was that he chose to rail at those who saw themselves in superhuman terms, people who would brook no opposition and who, in the peculiar setting of the Nigerian entity, had invariably coveted the power to decide who got dispatched and who did not.

But he always insisted that the Ogoni would demand their rights peacefully. He showed impatience each time it was alleged that he was planning for the Ogoni to secede. "I am not a fool", he would declare. "The Ogoni are only 500,000. Nigeria is about 100 million. Secession is not a viable option and we are not into that." Somebody wanted to know the meaning of Saro-Wiwa's death. Simple. It means that nothing has changed.

He is survived by his wife, Hauwa, his children, one of whom, Ken, has been the foremost campaigner for his father's freedom, and his father and mother, who are aged 91 and 75 years respectively.

Chuks Iloegbunam
Nigerian journalist and friend of Saro-Wiwa

Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, writer and environmentalist, born October 10, 1941; died November 10, 1995.

Money Guardian

Sweet charity in line to get its cards this Christmas

Teresa Hunter

CHARITY Christmas cards, heading for a big flop this year, have come under attack for their Scrooge-like attitude to good causes.

Now, for the first time, customers must be informed of exactly how much they are giving to charity when they buy cards, leading Labour, shadow Consumer Minister Nigel Griffiths to accuse them of selling their names too cheaply. His attack comes as charities are struggling to recover from a poor start to the Christmas season, and they fear his comments will cost them millions of pounds in lost sales. Buoyant sales as sales peak over the next two weeks are vital to prevent the charities' income falling this Christmas.

Mr Griffiths believes a charity should receive 80p in the pound for each card sold in its name and has called for a code of conduct with tighter guidelines to boost the amount paid to the charity.

But the NSPCC's Julia Evans said: "Mr Griffiths doesn't have a clue about the economics of retailing. If a customer buys a pack of cards for £3 only £1.70 is left after VAT has been deducted. It costs about 80p to produce, which leaves 90p to cover distribution costs and to provide a profit to the card publisher and the retailer. If we get 20p from that 90p, then we have done well."

Mr Griffiths complained after his researchers found six-pack cards on sale for £3.99 in Paperchase where only 12p — 3 per cent — went to the nominated charity Friends of the Earth. Paperchase also offered a pack where charities got 17 per cent. Oxford Street store DH Evans offered a pack where charities got 3.64 per cent. Save the Children said it would never go lower than 10p in the pound and the NSPCC said it would aim to get 10p but would not go lower than 7.5p in the pound. They admit that buying so-called royalty cards through a high street retailer is the least profitable way to support charities, and would encourage those who wish to give to charity to buy either direct, through their own charity shops, or through specialist charity shops. Yet royalty cards remain an important source of revenue for the charities, which argue that they allow them to raise money which would otherwise be lost to them.

A spokesman for Save the Children said: "Our income has been flat since the recession began. It is a struggle to maintain our levels of income, and there is little prospect of actually watching it grow."

Charities are anxious about the slow start to this year's bonanza, which they are blaming on the warm weather, lack of consumer confidence and intense competition in the mail order market.

Julia Rich of Cards for Good Causes said that royalty cards are a good source of revenue because the retailer takes on all the risks. She said: "The charity is not left with unsold cards."

The best way to buy such cards is direct from the charity, through their Christmas catalogue or from their own charity shops. Save the Children raises roughly £1 million annually through its Christmas sales from a turnover of £2 million. The law does not require charities to disclose how much is a direct donation on their catalogues. Although most are happy to disclose an overall profit figure, they are coy about breaking it down to how much is donated from each pack of cards or gift bought.

Some of the leading charities have calculated their net profit margin for Money Guardian to give readers an indication of average donations. But these figures should be treated with some caution.

Save the Children said that its gross profit of 60 per cent on a card fell to something like 25 per cent once distribution costs have been deducted. Similarly the NSPCC said that the charity raises 30p on its cards and 10p in the pound on its gifts in its catalogue.

Cancer Research Campaign figures were the same, although a spokesman said that the charities mark up rose to 55p in the pound for cards bought through one of their shops, where there was no catalogue cost to be deducted. Customers buying from their 900 local committees also contribute 40p in the pound direct to the charity.

Oxfam and Shelter were unable to deduct the production costs of the catalogue — which is why their profit figure looks higher.

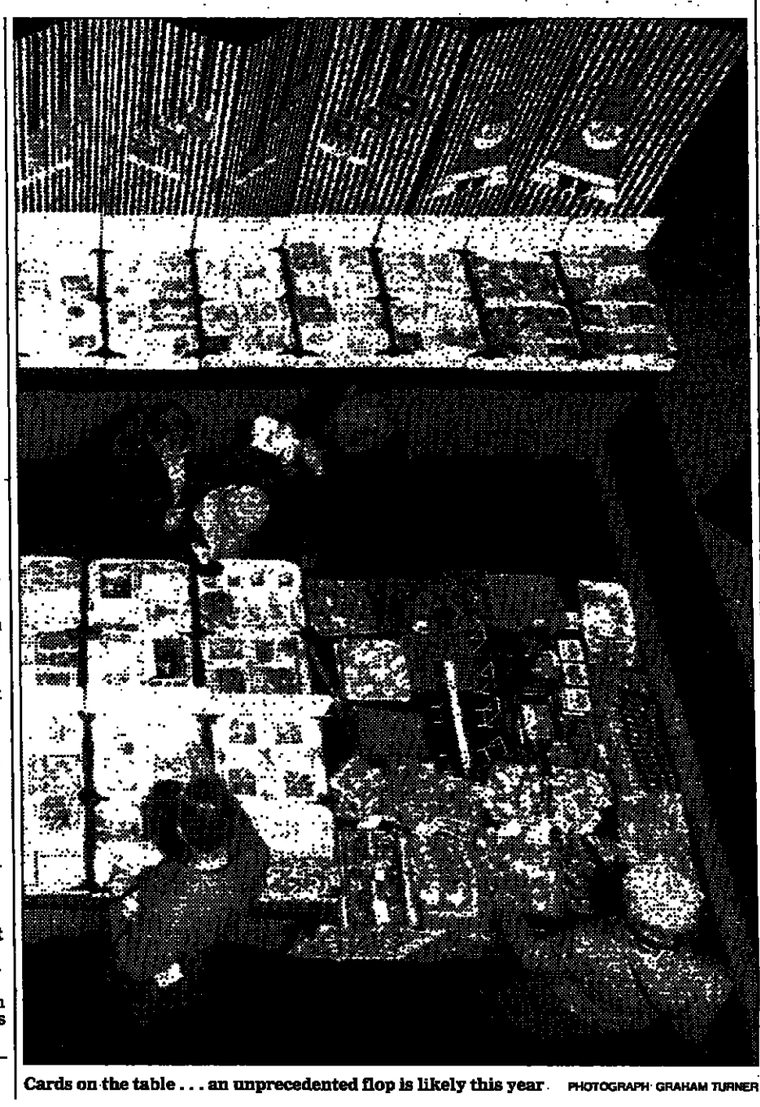
Money Guardian is edited by Margaret Hughes

Who gets what

Approximate guide to the net profit

	Catalogue costs Included		Catalogue costs Excluded	
	Cards	Gifts	Cards	Gifts
Save the Children	25p	15p		
Oxfam*			50p	Fair trade
Cancer Research Campaign	30p	10p		
Shelter			50p	30-55p
NSPCC	30p	10p		

**Oxfam runs a fair trade catalogue which returns all its profits to the manufacturers, thereby supporting struggling communities.*



Cards on the table . . . an unprecedented flop is likely this year PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Shopping around for plastic to ease the conscience

Cliff Jones

CHARITABLE shoppers can give as they spend with credit cards which donate to good causes. Issuers of affinity cards give a small percentage of the amount spent on the card to a specified charity.

The Co-operative Bank has Visa cards for various charities including Amnesty International, Feed the Children, Oxfam and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The cards carry no annual fee and have a 22.42 annual percentage rate on purchases. The bank donates £5 and 0.25 per cent of the amount spent to the particular charity. Since the launch of the RSPB card in October last year, the bank has donated more than £2 million to the charity.

Co-op spokesman David Smith says the success of affinity cards is easy to explain: "Everyone's a winner, because money goes to good causes at no cost to the cardholder. And people are advertising their support for the charity every time they use the card."

The bank also issues card for clubs and societies. It has a NASUWT card which makes donations to the teachers' trade union and also Labour Party and Liberal Democrat cards.

The Royal Bank of Scotland is also a big issuer of MasterCard affinity cards. It has, among others, cards for the National Canine Defence League, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, RAF Charities and the Woodland Trust. Cards have an annual fee of £10 and and APR of 23.2 on purchases. Like the Co-op, the bank donates £5 for each card account it opens and 25p for every £100 spent on the card each month.

The Royal Bank has affinity cards for the Birmingham City and Glasgow Rangers football clubs and a card which donates to the Conservative Party.

Bank of Scotland has affinity MasterCards for more than 350 groups including RSPCA and Marie Curie Cancer Care. The bank has issued half a million affinity cards which give 25p for every £100 spent.

Midland Bank has affinity cards for arts organisations as well as charities. Its National Trust Visa card has an APR of 23.1 and carries no annual fee. The bank donates £5 for each card issued and 5p to the Trust each time the card is used.

Halifax is the only building society to have an affinity card which it inherited from the Leeds, one of the first organisations to launch affinity cards. The Visa charity card makes donations to Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Mencap and the British Heart Foundation.

But borrowing on the affinity card is slightly more expensive than on the society's ordinary Visa card. The APR for purchases on the charity card is 20.8 compared to 20.6 and the annual fee is £12 rather than £10. The card donates 20p per £100 spent and £5 for each new card issued.

The difference in cost is minimal, but it does raise an important point about affinity cards. The Halifax Visa charity card APR of 20.8 is one of the lowest borrowing rates of any affinity card, but this is still higher than the lowest rate of less than 15 per cent on cards from issuers such as Save & Prosper.

People who intend to borrow on their credit cards should not be tempted by affinity cards simply because they give to charity. It would cost more than £90 to borrow £1,000 for a year on the Royal Bank of Scotland's affinity card than it would on the Save & Prosper card. Charitable souls could end up kicking themselves to think that this money saved could have gone to charity as a donation

Those who are unable to pay off their card bills each month are advised to opt for a card with a lower borrowing rate and give to their preferred charity.

SAVE MONEY NOW!!

3.5% OFF YOUR MORTGAGE

ENJOY A DISCOUNT OF 3.5% ON YOUR MORTGAGE UNTIL 31 AUGUST 1997
(EFFECTIVE INITIAL RATE OF ONLY 4.49% (4.8% APR))

PLUS:
- No Arrangement Fees
- Refund Valuation Fees to a maximum of £200 following completion
- Fee to cover Mortgage Indemnity Guarantee can be added to all loans including the maximum 95% loan to value
- Fully portable if you wish to move

WHAT YOU COULD SAVE
If you have a £40,000 Endowment mortgage at 7.99% (8.3% APR) (as charged by many major lenders) this offer could save you as much as £116.66 per month*, until 31/8/97.
Source: Mortgage Brain November 1995

GA Life
General Accident
Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority
166/06

CALL FREE NOW | 0500 100 200 MANY OTHER MORTGAGE OFFERS AVAILABLE | LINES OPEN 24 HRS

Typical Example of costs repayable for a 3.5% discount until 31.8.97 based on a discount rate of 4.49% (APR 4.8%) Married couple, man aged 28, woman aged 26, applying for an endowment mortgage of £40,000 on a £80,000 property over a 25 year term. Gross monthly interest repayments for 300 months of £149.67. 300 monthly endowment premiums of £56.40. Total gross amount payable £90,456.88. Example based on a discount rate of 4.49% (4.8% APR) until 31.8.97 and assumes that the rate applicable for the discount rate period will apply for the full term of the loan. The Society's base rate may vary from time to time. It includes typical Solicitor's costs of £146.88, Deeds release fee £50.00, Application fee £160.00 (including the cost of valuation), typical cost of buildings insurance £17.33 per month, and accrued interest. It excludes the cost of conveyancing. The property must be insured to the cost of replacement value. Where a new endowment policy is required this must be arranged through General Accident Life and assigned to the Society as additional security. *Comparison based on same typical example but without the discount. This example does not constitute a quotation or contract. Full written details including a quotation are available on request from General Accident Life, 2 Rougier Street, York YO1 1HR. Life assurance may be required with this mortgage and can be arranged through GA Life. All loans are subject to status, and a satisfactory valuation. Loans are not available for persons under 18 years of age. Limited funds available. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. MAXIMUM LOAN: With a PEP, the maximum loan to value is 90%. With an interest-only loan (where there is no investment plan for repaying the loan), the maximum loan to value is 85%. This mortgage scheme is offered in conjunction with West Bromwich Building Society and is available only through General Accident Life, which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority for life assurance, pensions and investments.

St Michael

GROUP PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION UP 8.8% TO £385 MILLION.

GROUP TURNOVER UP 5.7% TO £3.2 BILLION.
INTERNATIONAL M&S STORES TURNOVER UP 19%.
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES PROFIT UP 45%.
DIVIDEND INCREASED BY 7% TO 3p.

HALF YEAR RESULTS TO THE 30TH SEPTEMBER 1995

"The group has again produced solid growth against a background of consumer restraint and intense competition for disposable income"

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN SIR RICHARD GREENBURY

MARKS & SPENCER

هكذا من الأصل

US regulators threaten to sever distribution links built by Smithkline, Merck and Eli Lilly in takeovers

$12.3bn drugs headache

Mark Tran in New York and Roger Cowe

DRUG companies risk having wasted billions of dollars in a recent takeover frenzy after the threat of tough action by American regulators. SmithKline Beecham, Merck and Eli Lilly together spent $12.3 billion (£8 billion) on drug distributors hoping that this would guarantee an outlet for their products in an increasingly competitive market.

But regulators are threatening to sever the close links between the pharmaceutical companies and their newly purchased distributors, known as Pharmaceutical Benefit Managers (PBMs).

The General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, has accused British-owned SmithKline and the US leader Merck of abusing their relationships with the distributors.

It said their distribution subsidiaries had promoted the products of their parent companies at the expense of those belonging to competitors.

The Congressional watchdog also urged the Federal Trade Commission to keep the drug companies on a tight leash.

The powerful Food and Drug Administration is also showing increasing concern about the way the PBMs promote particular drugs.

Other drug companies and pharmacists have complained to the administration that the PBMs escape tight controls on drug promotion which apply to their owners, who actually manufacture the drugs.

At an FDA hearing last month, Stephen Stefano, a senior executive of Britain's Glaxo Wellcome, the world's biggest drug maker, testified that "manufacturer-owned PBM companies" had issued letters to doctors containing "unsupportable claims" disparaging Glaxo products.

Glaxo had considered buying its own distribution company but decided that panic among its competitors had made the prices of such companies unjustifiable.

Glaxo had put a value of little more than $1 billion on its target, PCS, which was subsequently bought by Eli Lilly for $4 billion.

That purchase prompted an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission. It approved Lilly's acquisition, but warned the drug companies that it was keeping their links under scrutiny.

One industry analyst said last night: "It does seem that benefiting from these acquisitions is more difficult than it seemed. The stock market is beginning to conclude that a lot of money may have been wasted."

The logic of the purchases was to capitalise on the distributors' power in determining which drugs are prescribed. As many as 100 million Americans are in health plans served by at least 40 PBMs. Just five of them account for 80 per cent of the market.

A spokesman for SmithKline yesterday denied that its $2.3 billion acquisition of a company called Diversified Pharmaceutical Services had been based on the prospect of selling more of its drugs. He said the group believed the PBM sector was an important area of the healthcare industry, which SmithKline should be active in. The main benefit from links between the two companies was expected to be statistical information about patient numbers and illnesses, which had not previously been available to the drug manufacturer.

Last month Medco, the PBM bought by Merck for $6 billion, settled civil charges that it broke consumer fraud laws by improperly promoting Merck drugs, agreeing with 17 states to reform the way it promotes drugs.

The states had accused Medco-employed pharmacists of lobbying doctors to switch patients to Merck drugs without explaining Medco's links with Merck. As part of the settlement, Merck has agreed to distribute 4 million leaflets to doctors publicising its ownership of Medco.

Spa gets steamed up over Pamela

Paul Murphy

CLONES of The Sanctuary, the women-only health spa in London's Covent Garden, are set to spring up across the country after a deal to sell the business to Tanya and Allan Wheway, the couple who used to run Champneys health farm in Hertfordshire.

Separately, the Sanctuary has been forced to abandon plans to take legal action against Pamela Anderson, star of the TV series Baywatch, who recently opened a new health club in Los Angeles using the name "Sanctuary".

The London-based company, which charges £45 a day for use of its basic facilities including a swimming pool, Jacuzzis and steam rooms, has been told by its lawyers that it cannot act because it failed to register its name in the US.

In a deal struck this week, a trust linked to City financier Robert Newman agreed to sell The Sanctuary to Wheway Lifestyle International, a new company backed by the venture capital arm of fund management group Mercury Asset Management. Mr Newman's trust will retain a small stake in the business.

It is understood that Tanya and Allan Wheway, who like to be known as "the mother and father of the modern health farm", hope to reach an agreement with a major chain of health clubs to set up small Sanctuary-style spas alongside their other leisure activities. The Wheways owned Champney's, which is set in 170 acres in the Chiltern Hills, Hertfordshire, until 1984 when it was sold to Guinness. But the couple bought it back eight years later, only to sell out once more in May last year. Most recently they have been involved in the development of a health resort in Thailand, Chiva-Som, and a health farm in India.

The Sanctuary is famous for offering women a hedonistic mix of bathing, massage and beauty treatments. Even Mr Newman is not allowed past reception during opening hours.

After his recent move to take control of the struggling City wine bar chain, Courtyard Leisure, there had been speculation that The Sanctuary would be injected into this quoted vehicle. Instead, Mr Newman has indicated that he will simply be carrying out renovation work to Courtyard's outlets before deciding what to do with what is effectively a "shell" company.

Sanctuary in a legal technicality . . . Pamela Anderson, the Baywatch television series actress PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Clinton's veto threat brings default closer

Mark Tran in New York

PRESIDENT Clinton was yesterday set to veto temporary spending and borrowing bills from the Republican-controlled Congress, moving the US closer to a government shutdown and, for the first time in its history, a default.

In the latest volley of exchanges, Mr Clinton said: "We can't have a serious debate under threat of a government default and shutdown . . . I believe Congress should stay in this weekend and finish this work."

Republicans have attached provisions to both bills deemed unacceptable to the White House. The temporary spending bill comes with cuts in some areas of domestic spending of up to 60 per cent and contains provisions raising Medicare premiums, and restricting lobbying by organisations and businesses receiving federal funds.

"This bill is dead, dead, dead," warned a House Democrat, Steny Hoyer, while White House chief of staff Leon Panetta said: "This is not a responsible way to do business."

Speaking for the Republicans, Representative David Dreier said: "If this bill is dead, dead, dead, it is for the reason that the White House opposes, opposes, opposes a balanced budget."

In the debt-ceiling bill, the Republicans have dropped a controversial proposal to dismantle the Commerce Department over six months but the bill still contains provisions objectionable to the White House. The Republicans seek to limit the Treasury's ability to avoid a default by barring it from tapping funds from social security and civil service retirement funds.

While a government shutdown has become a familiar Washington ritual — it has happened 11 times since 1977 — the spectre of a default has injected high drama into the budget debate. On this issue, President Clinton has the backing of the financial establishment. Former Treasury officials — Democratic and Republican — have accused the Republican Party of jeopardising the financial integrity of the US.

The prospect of a default has begun to unsettle the markets, now slightly less confident that the unthinkable will be avoided. The Dow Jones index fell as much as 23 points in early trading before recovering by early afternoon and moving into record territory. But the bond market was less sanguine. The 30-year treasury bond fell by almost a point, pushing the yield up to 6.33 per cent.

Coal chief's brother is bankrupted

Roger Cowe

TONY Budge, whose younger brother, Richard, runs the company which bought most of Britain's coal mines, has been made personally bankrupt following the collapse of the family business, AF Budge.

The move means that his personal wealth will become available to creditors of the crashed company and that he is unable to act as a company director for at least three years.

Mr Budge and two fellow directors are also fighting an action brought by the Department of Trade and Industry to disqualify them from being company directors. The case is expected to come to court next June.

Richard Budge was excluded from the disqualification proceedings after a decision not to take action against him a week before the pathfinder prospectus was published for the privatisation of the coal mines. He is boss of RJB Mining, the company which bought the mines from the Government. He had been a director of AF Budge until months before it hit trouble.

AF Budge was a collection of businesses in activities as diverse as guided missiles and construction. The company hit financial trouble in the early 1990s and went into administrative receivership in December 1992 in an attempt to solve its financial crisis and salvage viable parts of the group. This was followed two months later by compulsory liquidation.

The company crashed with debts of £85 million and the accountancy firm Coopers & Lybrand has been trying to recover as much as possible for the main creditors, believed to be the Inland Revenue and banks.

The accountants' application to Sheffield county court for Mr Budge to be made bankrupt was granted on Wednesday when a judge accepted that Mr Budge had been personally responsible for £1 million transferred out of the company.

All liquidators are required to report to the Department of Trade and Industry on the conduct of company directors prior to a crash. Following C&L's report, the DTI began proceedings against Tony Budge, his wife Janet and finance director Michael Yates.

In preliminary hearings earlier this year, the DTI alleged that Tony Budge had used company money to finance his extravagant lifestyle.

Mr Budge claims that he is being victimised and has suffered because he could not afford expensive legal advice.

Hot summer invigorates Unilever

Roger Cowe

BUMPER ice-cream sales helped the grocery group Unilever to a 9 per cent rise in operating profit in the third quarter of the year. Sales rose by 6 per cent to £8.2 billion, bringing the total for the year to date to more than £23 billion.

With the help of currency swings, pre-tax profits in the quarter rose by a tenth to £785 million, bringing the profit for nine months of 1995 to £1.9 billion.

Unilever, which owns Walls ice-cream in the UK, said the new Solero fruit and ice-cream lolly had been a great success. It was introduced in 12 countries this year and will spread to a further eight territories next summer. The hot weather helped Walls double its ice-cream sales in August.

While ice-cream helped the food business, Unilever's profits from detergents fell because of extra advertising to win back customers after last year's controversy over Persil Power, which was accused of damaging clothes.

Erstwhile top director's pay cut to a mere £1.7m

LISA BUCKINGHAM on the latest leaders in the boardroom remuneration league

BILL BROWN, the publicity-shy insurance broker who was once the highest paid director in Britain, saw his salary dip from £2.1 million to just £1.7 million last year.

That puts him on about a tenth of the remuneration of Peter Wood, the insurance guru at Royal Bank of Scotland, and means his headline earnings have dropped every year from the late 1980s.

But the latest 18 per cent drop in basic salary for Mr Brown, who in the late 1980s was paid £8 million a year before dividend income, is not as steep as the fall in profits for Walsham Brothers, the family controlled Lloyd's broking group which saw pre-tax profits slump by 30 per cent to £2.2 million last year.

It means that Mr Brown's salary and pension payment outstripped the profit of the entire group for 1994.

Accounts from Walsham Brothers, which used to be one of the most successful broking groups in the Lloyd's market, show that administrative expenses — largely made up of salaries — outstripped the £6.7 million of revenues by £5 million.

Some £7.2 million of the £11.7 million of administrative expenses is accounted for by salaries but the accounts show that Walsham's three directors — Mr Brown and his two brothers — earned a collective £3.5 million including their pension payments while the company's 99 other staff were given £3.8 million.

Walsham Brothers specialises in the excess of loss (XL) market, the impetus of which has been removed following investigations into potential rigging of the XL market.

Accounts show that Walsham Brothers' revenues last year fell from £7.8 million to £6.7 million; only interest income and profits from investment sales held pre-tax profits at just £1 million below the year before.

In addition to his reduced salary, however, Mr Brown earned about £260,000 in dividends from the company last year as well as extra pension payments.

Although Mr Brown's salary has reduced every year since the late 1980s, his personal fortune is still estimated as one of the largest in the country.

In terms of insurance salaries, Walsham Brothers was recently overtaken by the Benfield Group, four of whose directors are in the league table of top earners.

Having started as a teaboy, the Benfield chairman, Matthew Harding, is reckoned to have a fortune of more than £125 million.

From Brum to the Budget

Next week: Tony Blair and Michael Heseltine woo the CBI at its conference in Birmingham . . . President Clinton and Pacific Rim leaders try to create an open market in the world's fastest growing region . . . and the Guardian's 'wise women' make their Budget submission.

The Budget: After the Chancellor sits down on November 28, the Guardian offers commentary and analysis over two days about what Kenneth Clarke has — and hasn't — done for you

Saturday Notebook

Lang trapped in the headlights of merger juggernaut

Alex Brummer

THE Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang is in danger of joining the pantheon of least-effective Conservative incumbents at the DTI. Despite the weight of expert advice on the need to let the Monopolies and Mergers Commission loose on the mergers which are re-shaping the electricity industry, he sits Buddha-like on his hands.

Faced with even more far reaching changes in the electricity market than those ushered in by privatisation, the country has a do-nothing Secretary of State promoted beyond his skills (honed on the Lloyd's insurance markets) to the most significant commercial post in government.

John Major's calamitous decision to promote his elegant and faithful manager in last summer's Tory leadership election will, by most accounts, end up costing electricity consumers dearly.

After a month-long lull, takeover fever was back with a vengeance in the electricity sector over the past week. On Monday one of the most aggressive US utilities, Central and South West Corporation, swooped upon Seeboard with an offer it could not refuse of £1.6 billion. This was followed by a frenzy of buying in South Wales Electricity shares driving the market price up to the point at which the predator, Welsh Water, was required by the City authorities to reveal its identity — another unedifying spectacle.

What is really frightening about the latest offers is that they have taken place almost without comment. Ian Lang's triumph is that he has made the extraordinary multi-billion bids for chunks of one of our basic industries, unremarkable politically. Even Labour, which in the past has challenged the premise on which the electricity mergers were based, appears to have given up the ghost. It is so busy thinking about how to spend its utility tax windfalls, it has failed to grasp that there are others, like the American mega-utilities, which may drain them dry first.

EVEN so, there is nothing specifically wrong with privatisation of the energy market. Indeed, privatisation has produced huge efficiences in overmanned industries. One only has to look at gas — first the commercial market and shortly the domestic market — to realise that competition can bring critical price benefits.

That is because a single determined regulator, Sir James McKinnon, by bringing pressure to bear on the industry, succeeded in triggering an MMC inquiry. The specific recommendations, of a slow burn towards open competition and a hiving off of supply lines, were re-interpreted by the former Trade Secretary Michael Heseltine. Instead, he opted to open up a closed marketplace in the shortest period of time. That may be terrifying for the management of British Gas, stuck with its expensive long-term supply contracts, but excellent for removing the monopoly yoke.

In electricity, the laid back attitude at the DTI is leading the country in entirely different directions. Having learned from the mistakes of British Gas privatisation, the objective with the electricity industry was to create a genuine marketplace. This was done by separating electricity generation through PowerGen, National Power and Nuclear Electric, from the regional electricity companies; designing a self-standing distribution company through the National Grid and putting at the centre an electricity pool where the RECs could bid for available supplies according to need.

At least three issues, each worthy of their own MMC investigation, are raised by the rush into electricity mergers. First, there is the distortion of the market caused by vertical integration, through the bids by PowerGen and National Power for Midlands and Southern (and to a lesser extent Scottish Power for Manweb).

Second, there is the perversion of the objectives of water privatisation implicit in the bids for NorWeb by North West Water and Welsh Water for South Wales Electricity. Third, the regulatory mismatch which will occur as a result of allowing South Western and Seeboard to be bought by American utilities.

BY FAR the strongest case for an MMC review on competition grounds arises from the PowerGen/National Power swoops on regional companies. Such deals, in effect, would leave the newly integrated generators with a captive market for their output and could, in theory, charge Midlands and Southern customers a higher tariff than other consumers in areas where there is choice.

Moreover, the vertically integrated companies would also have market information about their local supply base as well as inside information on bidding strategy in the pool. This would put the other RECs at a considerable disadvantage. It would also dismantle the checks and balances put in place to ensure genuine post-privatisation competition.

A government which had a genuine belief in free markets would have no hesitation in throwing this back to the MMC. But this government fears that doing so might create new uncertainties and cast a cloud over nuclear privatisation.

The arguments against the water-electricity mergers are less compelling — except that they give a single supplier so much power, when the same efficiencies could be achieved through out-sourcing billing and metering systems. The debate largely rests with water privatisation and the low gearing given to the regional companies in a move to encourage supply and environmental investment.

Finally, the MMC — on public interest grounds — ought to take a good look at the US invaders. There is nothing wrong with American investment in Britain: after all, it has saved some of our greatest engineering names like Jaguar.

However, the record of the US utilities, particularly in the environmental area, is mixed. Moreover, the high prices paid for British power distribution suggests that they believe they will have an easier time with the regulators here than in the US.

The UK is saddled with a regulator powerless to prevent a corruption of the stabilisers put into the electricity market, and a Trade Secretary supine in the face of genuine challenge to competition.

Regulator sees customers helping pay for British Gas price bungle

Simon Beavis Industrial Editor

OFGAS, the gas industry regulator, yesterday hinted that consumers could be forced to pay part of the bill for extricating British Gas from a contractual tangle which has left it with huge amounts of high price gas it cannot sell.

In a consultation document on how price controls will have to be changed after 1997 — in the middle of the Government's experiment to introduce competition into the domestic gas market — Ofgas suggests that customers will have to share the burden.

British Gas committed itself to fixed price take or pay gas contracts when it had a monopoly. But following the Government's decision to open the gas market, prices have fallen sharply and BG has been left with a £500 million bill for this year alone.

Ofgas suggests that one way of dealing with this problem is to allow BG to pass on the costs to consumers.

"The judgment that must be reached concerns the extent to which shareholders of British Gas customers should bear these losses," the document says.

The news came as the boardroom upheaval at British Gas continued.

News of Norman Blacker's resignation from the board came only a day after the company announced it was handing back its Government charter mark, an award for high standards of service. The company denied that the two events were linked.

BG announced only last month that Mr Blacker was one of three directors at the company who were to retire immediately or early.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.07	France 7.42	Italy 2,470	Singapore 2.19
Austria 15.10	Germany 2.17	Malta 0.5425	South Africa 5.56
Belgium 44.25	Greece 363.00	Netherlands 2.43	Spain 186.00
Canada 2.075	Hong Kong 12.00	New Zealand 2.38	Sweden 10.37
Cyprus 0.70	India 54.46	Norway 9.80	Switzerland 1.73
Denmark 8.40	Ireland 0.96	Portugal 228.00	Turkey 78,456
Finland 6.62	Israel 4.75	Saudi Arabia 5.89	USA 1.5425

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

German report acknowledges London is top financial centre. KATERINA VON WALDERSEE reports

Frankfurt loses yet more credit

A FRANK admission that Frankfurt is losing the race to overtake London as a world financial centre has come from a source uncomfortably close to the German city.

A report published by the central bank of the state of Hesse — where Frankfurt is located — this week suggested the city will play second fiddle to London even though it is to be the home of the European Central Bank, has attracted several foreign banks and has benefited from the modernising of Germany's cumbersome financial system.

Since the late 1980s Frankfurt has undergone a facelift to enhance its international image and provide a financial environment capable of rivalling London. But the report says: "Frankfurt is certainly no easy financial centre, in fact it is rather a demanding one."

Although 59 foreign banks have moved to Frankfurt over the past 10 years, they still only total 135, compared with about 400 in London.

Nearly 70 per cent of trading in German treasury bonds takes place in London, mainly because of restrictions in German financial practice. This means that the share taken by the London International Financial Futures Exchange of the trading volume of the German mark interest rate derivatives exceeds that of the DTB, its Frankfurt counterpart. In addition, London has expanded its share of mark/dollar trading in recent years.

"Once this kind of trading leaves Germany, it is next to impossible to bring it back," says Thomas Weisgerber of the Federation of German Banks.

The report says that Frankfurt also suffers from Germans weaknesses such as high income tax, inflexible employment legislation and above average personnel expenses.

Both the Federation of German Banks and the Association of Foreign Banks in Germany have long pressed the government and the Bundesbank to step up their efforts to modernise the financial system and make Frankfurt more competitive.

The two organisations argue that restrictions such as the minimum reserve requirement for banks — not abolished in Germany though lower than it used to be — are main reasons for London's lead over Frankfurt. According to the Hesse report, foreign banks in Frankfurt have had to grapple with traditionally strong links between domestic banks and their customers. Many are trying to overcome customer reserve by offering specialised services not available from domestic banks.

> 'We are happy about the foreigners being here, otherwise we would be even more provincial than we are now'

While Frankfurt strives to improve its international standing, a string of German banks including the largest, Deutsche, have provoked wrath at home by moving the bulk of their investment banking and research to London.

The finance ministry called Deutsche's move a "slap in the face" for Frankfurt, but the bank said the weaknesses of the German financial centre were clear for all to see.

"We are not living in the world which Bonn imagines, we are living in a global world," says Rolf-Ernst Breuer, a member of Deutsche's management board. Mr Breuer underlines a point made in the Hesse report by stating that Frankfurt owed its product innovations to imports from the US and London which brought enrichment to the German market.

"We are happy about the foreigners being here, otherwise we would be even more provincial than we are now," he says.

According to the Association of Foreign Banks in Germany, the moves by Deutsche and Dresdner Bank to London may undermine Frankfurt's status as an international centre.

"It's a worrying development but we can profit by offering know-how and expertise in Germany which banks like Deutsche are buying abroad," says Jan Marwede, the association's manager.

While attacking Deutsche, the government is not averse to seeking advice abroad. Schroders is providing advice on the privatisation of the state-owned Postbank and Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, will be heavily involved in the sale of Deutsche Telecom next year.

European banks which have either set up their own offices or have acquired German banks make up the largest group in Frankfurt. They are followed by Japanese and US institutions. The foreign banks have become leading finance sector employers with a workforce totalling around 11,000.

About half of the participants on the Frankfurt stock exchange are foreign banks. They account for one third of its turnover. They are even more active on the DTB, responsible for some 50 per cent of turnover.

Despite the disadvantages of Frankfurt, the Hesse report reckons that the presence of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt is likely to act as a magnet for foreign banks.

"Experience shows that financial market players want to be present where the decisions on monetary policies are made," it says.

Irish steel rescue at risk

Mark Milner
European Business Editor

THE British and Irish governments are at loggerheads over a rescue plan for Ireland's last remaining steel plant.

Two months ago the Irish government reached a deal to sell its heavily loss-making Irish Steel plant near Cork to ISPAT International, an Indian-owned multinational steelmaker. ISPAT would pay £1 for the plant but gave guarantees on jobs and a £30 million investment programme.

However, opposition from Britain's industry minister, Tim Eggar, has blocked the deal which — because it involves some £28 million of Irish government aid — requires the unanimous backing of European Union member states.

Britain is worried about the impact of the agreement on British Steel's plant at Shelton, near Stoke-on-Trent, which, like the Irish plant, manufactures steel rods.

"We cannot agree anything which imperils British jobs and the economic viability of British companies," Mr Eggar said after five hours of talks this week.

British Steel welcomed the UK government's stance: "In a market suffering from overcapacity, the use of subsidy to preserve jobs in a loss-making company in one region of the European Union is a direct threat to jobs in rival, competitive and profitable companies," said a spokesman.

A spokesman for Ireland's Enterprise and Employment Department rejected claims that the plan for Irish Steel would jeopardise jobs, particularly at British Steel's Shelton works: "We just don't accept that at all." Nor had Irish Steel led the way in recent price-cutting, he said.

According to the Irish side, Britain was alone in opposing the rescue plan for Irish Steel. Ireland's enterprise and employment minister, Richard Bruton, is determined to press ahead with efforts to secure the plant's future.

During this week's negotiations in Brussels he said: "The UK were adopting a position . . . that would make for an unviable plant and all the consequences which flow from that."

The Irish are keen to restart negotiations with the British government. Irish Steel has been a headache for years. Since 1974 it has made a profit in only three years and has run up losses of more than £144 million.

However, Irish sources say that the closure of the plant, employing over 330 people, would have a serious economic and political impact.

Olive crisis blights Spain after worst drought of century

The harvest will be down 50 per cent taking brutal toll on farm workers, reports ADELA GOOCH from Madrid

THE olive is hardy, used to the harshest climes, but after five years of drought Spain's olive groves are in distress. This year's harvest will be down by about 50 per cent; the price of olive oil has risen sharply and the human and economic toll in areas dependent on the crop is brutal.

In the Andalusian province of Jaen, which produces 40 per cent of the national output, and where agricultural workers depend on the olive harvest to clock up enough working days to qualify for a special rural subsidy, food aid has been handed out.

The Asociacion Agraria Jovenes Agricultores, (AAJA) a young farmers' organisation, puts the losses so far at 215,000 million pesetas, centred in Andalucia but also in Castille and Extremadura. The olive accounts for a quarter of the southern region's agricultural production and for 6 per cent at national level.

The Spanish crop averages 550,000 tonnes of oil, worth 210,000 million pesetas a year to the state. This year it could be as low as 210,000 tonnes — most optimistic expectations only run to 250,000 tonnes.

Spain has 167 million olive trees; 21 per cent of the world total spread over 2.1 million hectares. The country is the world's biggest producer of olive oil with 30 per cent of world sales and 40 per cent of European. Much of the Spanish production is bought by Italy for marketing as Italian; a legacy of the Franco days when Spanish products were embargoed.

The crisis hit as Spain was trying to modernise its industry and improve its market share with better presentation and an image encouraging consumer awareness of the benefits of the Mediterranean diet.

In Spain, the price of a litre of olive oil has risen 40 per cent in one year and the government has been asking the European Union to increase the production and commercialisation subsidy which stands at 142.20 ecus per 100 kilos.

Producers fear price rises will alienate consumers who will opt for cheaper sunflower oil. Spanish housewives use olive oil as their staple cooking fat but consumption has dropped 20 per cent during the year. Many have started to hoard after reports that more price increases are likely.

"It is very unusual to see olive trees shrivel up but that is happening," says Juan Molina of the AAJA. "If the drought carries on for another year we will be in a dire situation."

The drought, the worst this century, is one of the reasons behind a warning in a regional government report that Andalusians may have to start emigrating again in search of work.

The Spanish agriculture ministry has channelled emergency aid to drought-stricken areas and points to the olive trees' resistance as a source of optimism. "The olive industry has suffered and is suffering but the tree's basic characteristic is its hardiness — a wet autumn is all we need," said a ministry specialist.

Dry rot . . . the olive is a hardy tree but after five years of drought these ones in Seville are beginning to shrivel up PHOTOGRAPH: CARLOS MARQUEZ

Commission agrees to curb promotion of 'miracle cures'

Financial staff

EUROPEAN Union consumer ministers this week agreed reforms designed to prevent companies using unfair comparisons with rivals.

The ministers, mindful of the damage done to consumers by growing advertising on unregulated "miracle products" which offer wonders without scientific proof, also asked the European Commission to draw up a study on them by next November.

Consumer Commissioner Emma Bonino said the study would look into the type of product for which it is said "you can lose 10 kilos in two days and make your lover come back to you".

She said of the study: "It's indispensible, because you are bombarded with this kind of advertising which promises the earth."

On the basis of the report ministers will decide if and how to control the products.

Miracle products cited by the Spanish EU presidency involve supposed cures for excess cholesterol, tension, stress, and skin diseases, and bracelets which are supposed to eliminate rheumatism.

A Spanish study discussed by the ministers said the remedies were marketed using distance selling, in health food shops and pharmacies, and when potential customers received services in health clinics, hairdressers and massage parlours.

The EU ministers were amending legislation on misleading advertising to take account of an increasing tendency to score commercial points by comparing a product with rival ones.

The new rules, which have still to be formally adopted, says that such "comparative advertising" should be allowed as long as it is not misleading, it compares goods or services meeting the same needs or intended for the same purpose.

Albania trades in personality cult for free-market equality

Once the poorest country in Europe, it is now the IMF's best pupil. LUCY HOOKER reports

TIRANA'S 10-year-olds amuse themselves on Sunday afternoons by sliding down the sides of the capital's pyramid-shaped business and cultural centre. Until five years ago, the building was the sacred Hoxha museum, dedicated to the cult of Albania's communist dictator. Now it's fair game.

The streets, once reserved for privileged party cadres, teem with Albanians steering old bangers with joyous blasts of the horn among the chaos of donkey-carts and bicycles.

Enver Hoxha's 40-year rule of isolation, autarky and ruthless repression made Albania the poorest country in Europe, with gross domestic product per capita less than £400.

Those days are gone. Now Albanians are test-driving the free market, and proving surprisingly skilful. For the past two years Albania has been one of Europe's best performing economies. "When the economy is in such bad shape you need drastic measures to change it. It was shock therapy reform," says finance minister, Dylber Vrioni.

"The government's feeling was: 'let us suffer, we're used to it. We've been suffering for the last 50 years. we'll make a sacrifice for a bit longer'. In a certain sense it has worked."

The Albanian economy grew in 1993 by 11 per cent and again in 1994 by nearly 8 per cent. The government will achieve the International Monetary Fund's target of 7 per cent of GDP for the budget deficit in 1995 and the current account was broadly in balance in the first two quarters. Inflation was reined in from 250 per cent in 1992 to a year-on-year inflation of only 2 per cent in June and July.

According to Mr Vrioni, the secret is moving fast and retaining the initiative. The government slashed subsidies, nearly halved public sector employees and kept an iron-fisted rein on spending. They let the currency, the lek, float freely and made inflation their priority. Now they are tackling everything else simultaneously.

"You cannot know how many directions we are working in — privatisation of the banks, mass privatisation, the capital market to be established, a treasury bills market, the introduction of VAT," said Kristaq Luniku, governor of the National Bank.

Albania has earned the accolade, "the IMF's best pupil", and in return has received credit lines, World Bank grants and the finance for a ground-breaking, debt-restructuring deal that effectively absolves Albania from its previous £335 million debt.

Also helping to prop up Albania's otherwise disastrous current account balance is the estimated £200 million which flows into the country every year from around 350,000 Albanians (a tenth of the population) working abroad.

A rough and ready market economy is picking up in Albania. The yard outside the National Bank has become an informal trading floor where middle-aged men tout everything from western cigarettes to foreign currency and privatisation vouchers. The ground-floor population of Tirana are busy turning their front rooms into kiosks, offices and cafes.

However, Albania's GDP still only stands at around three-quarters of its 1990 level when the economy collapsed.

The government is desperate to improve on the tiny £140 million it had attracted by the end of 1994.

The country has plenty to offer, an unspoilt Adriatic coastline, proximity to the European Union, the continent's only source of chrome ore and an enormous potential in hydroelectricity.

Unfortunately, doing business in Albania is still something of a battle. Bank transactions take place on pen and paper. Roads are primitive and pot-holed. Deliveries are held up by livestock blocking the road or policemen asking for dollar donations.

Power cuts are frequent as the primitive distribution network becomes more and more overloaded and cowboy construction companies unwittingly cut power cables.

Anglo-Dutch oil company, Shell, has located in new buildings on the edge of Tirana, with its own emergency electricity generator. But it hasn't solved everything. "They cut off our telephone because we hadn't paid the bill," said finance chief, Peter Wit. "I explained we hadn't received a bill and they said that was because they had run out of paper to print it on. They still cut us off."

Eurocats

Update

□ Peugeot Citroën car registrations fell by 5 per cent in the first nine months of the year. In a market that the company described as "listless" and disrupted by currency turbulence, it said it had sought to maintain a balance between margins and market share.

□ **The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has signed an agreement for a 39.2 million ecu (£32 million) loan for Uzbek banks as part of a trade agreement. "It will liberalise the trade system by improving the availability of financing and lowering its effective cost," said EBRD deputy vice-president, David Hexter.**

□ Tesco has bought a 79 per cent stake in Polish food retailer, Savia SA, for £8 million. The move is part of Tesco's plan to "explore opportunities in the developing markets of Central and Eastern Europe," the supermarkets group said this week. Savia operates 36 stores in southern Poland. Tesco already owns a 71 per cent stake in food retailer Global, which operates in north-west Hungary.

□ **The Belgian government has accepted Tele Danmark and Singapore Telecom as potential bidders for a stake in Belgian state telecommunications firm, Belgacom.**

□ Portugal's new Socialist government will not resort to competitive devaluations of the escudo to help industry because it would be counter-productive, said prime minister Antonio Guterres.

□ **Deutsche Post, Germany's state-owned post office, said this week that it now plans to begin listing shares on the stock exchange in 1998. It made an operating profit of DM257 million (£115 million) last year for the first time ever, after a loss of DM173 million the year before.**

European Business is edited by Mark Milner

BREITLING
1884

AEROSPACE

Altitude, speed and time are still shown in modern cockpits by means of a pointer or needle — precisely because this sort of indicator sweeping over a circular gauge is what a pilot sees best, particularly when keeping track of countless other pieces of information.
But digital readouts can for instance provide times to 1/100th of a second and alphanumerical data along with simplifying the setting of programable functions.
These display principles contribute to the AEROSPACE's design excellence which, in turn, explains its selection as the personal instrument of many of the world's finest aerobatics teams.

AVAILABLE FROM SELECTED JEWELLERS
THROUGHOUT GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.
FOR YOUR NEAREST STOCKIST TELEPHONE 0171 637 5167.

BREITLING SA, P.O. Box 1132, SWITZERLAND - 2540 GRENCHEN
Tel.: 41 65 / 51 11 31, Fax: 41 65 / 53 10 09

INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Drought blights Spain's olive groves, page 23 **Billion dollar trouble for drug companies, page 22**

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

*Finance***Guardian**

Inheritance tax on works of art is avoided if the public can see them. Few do but if the tax goes will this valuable access remain? RICHARD THOMAS reports

Family silver seldom seen

No tax please, we're Georgian . . . Mr Purefoy's salt cellars

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

'This is a most unwelcome intrusion,' complained the Right Honourable Nicholas Soames, minister for the armed forces . . .

THE minister's unhappiness stems from a request to visit his flat in Westminister to admire a fine mahogany three-tier buffet. No tax was paid by Mr Soames when he inherited the piece, on the understanding that members of the public could see it.

But the minister grants access with enormous ill grace. He even insists, like an obsessive English teacher, that the enquiry be rephrased. "I'd like *to* see it, *please*" would not do. "Please may I be allowed to see it?" was the magic phrase, after which a call from his PA was promised to set up a time "of *my* choosing and at *my* convenience."

His reaction is a pity, because it is not typical of those enjoying the inheritance tax break on works of art. You certainly have to be assiduous in tracking down pieces on the Revenue's list of exemptions, but once owners are contacted, they are generally quite happy to show off their works — not least because in many cases it is for the very first time.

Take Anthony Purefoy, a pensioner who lives in Surrey. Although he assumed the first person ever to ask to see his Georgian salt cellars simply had to be a thief — no *less than three times he said.* "You don't *look* like a burglar" — he could not have been more obliging. "Yes, of course, come over today."

Mr Purefoy is the sort of chap to gladden the Inland Revenue's heart, but such goodwill is not assumed. After the scheme — which costs the Government about £60 million a year in lost revenue — was criticised as a tax boon for the rich, steps were taken to make the list more accessible. The data has been computerised — previously it was available *only* on paper — and an annual audit of accessibility is now carried out, involving 5 per cent of the items.

Such measures have not damped enthusiasm for the scheme, *though. The Inland* Revenue's Register of Conditionally Exempt Works of Art — dubbed the "V&A list" after the Victoria and Albert museum, where the original information was kept — now contains 14,443 items, against 9,334 just two years ago.

One of the most striking is an impressive painting by Turner depicting Ludlow Castle. It normally lives in a Sussex stately home, but the estate manager is happy to arrange a viewing — once again, for the first time anyone can remember.

Here the concern is less with theft — Turners come with expensive security — than with lucre. The manager is slightly disappointed when the question "Are you a potential purchaser?" yields a nega*tive answer*.

Notwithstanding, the painting is made available for viewing in the estate office with minimal fuss, and in some style: "The Turner will be ready for you at 10am, sir."

For Londoners, an additional benefit is that most of the listed items are within a stone's throw. This reflects the fact that art tends to go with southern affluence. But smart lawyers and accountants almost certainly have a lot to do with it too: why else are there 193 drawings listed in Buckinghamshire, and just two in Northumberland?

The art world recognises that both access to and benefits from the exemption are inequitable, but would rather see a flawed system than none at all. A key advantage, for example, is that beneficiaries are normally expected to make the works available for temporary exhibitions.

As Giles Waterfield, director of the Dulwich Art Gallery, said: "The list *is* absolutely of value, one of the very few ways in which the Government does support the arts."

Experts reckon the value of the exemption system is twofold. First, it helps to keep collections together under one roof *rather than scattered* across the globe. In many cases, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The Sussex estate with the Turner also has watercolours by the same artist, which might otherwise adorn the walls of Californian millionaires.

In addition, as Mr Waterfield explains, the tax break encourages works to remain *in situ*, where the artistic value is enhanced by historical context. "Because of our rich and varied history, the exemption helps to keep the works in the right context."

Or, of course, in the right family. A sketch by John Constable of his wife and three children which appears on the register has appeared in a number of exhibitions, but it normally adorns the wall of a house owned by a Mr John Constable, the artist's great-great-grandson.

Mr and Mrs Constable have never had a request from a member of the public to see their ancestor's drawing, but it can't last. Forget "private" viewings of the Summer Collection at the Royal Academy with another 200 people and nasty white wine; enjoy a fabulous work of art with only a blood relative of the creator for company.

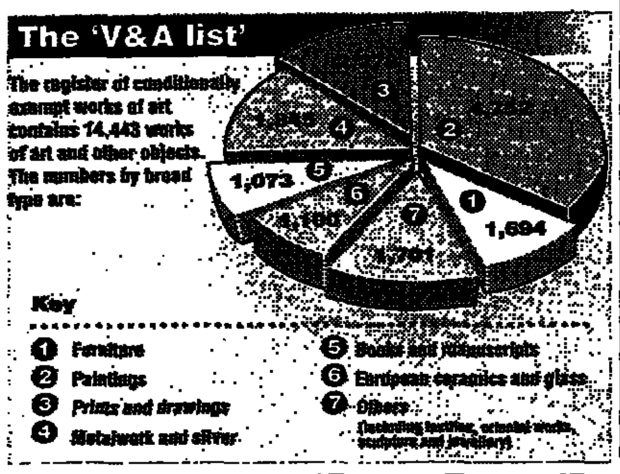
Of course, great works of art comprise a tiny minority of those listed. Salt cellars outnumber Sisleys by some margin. As one curator admitted: "Most of the items are of limited artistic value." But he pointed out that if the criteria were *toughened up, the bene*fits would be even more tilted towards the rich, which could further undermine support for the scheme. "And if it went, it would be a disaster for the art world."

Ironically, the greatest threat to the register now is not from left-wingers whinging about privilege but from the Conservative Party, because there are moves to get rid of inheritance tax altogether. John Major is committed to abolishing estate duty. It is even conceivable that the *Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke,* will scrap it on Budget Day, November 28.

With no tax to be exempt from, the system could eventually collapse, a penny which is beginning to drop among art experts. There is no immediate threat, because the exemption is conditional on keeping the piece on the register. The tax bill is not cancelled, simply deferred.

But once today's owners die and the piece is passed on again, the taxman would almost certainly have to let the conditions drop.

So unless the mandarins think up some new wheeze to keep the register intact, Mr Soames's party could ensure his descendants will be able to *enjoy the buffet entirely free of* interruption from the unwashed British public.



Well-to-do's break a Budget issue

● Inheritance tax is levied at 40 per cent on estates worth more than £154,000. Last year 16,500 bills were issued, raising £1.5 billion. At this year's Conservative conference, John Major described inheritance tax as one which "damages investment and stultifies wealth. We must cut it and then — when affordable — we should abolish it."

● *Some form of relief on es*tate duty for works of art has been in existence since 1896, but the public access requirement was put on the statute books by a Labour government in 1976.

● When duty becomes payable, the recipient of a work of art can apply to have it recognised as of sufficient "national, scientific, historic or artistic" interest to justify an exemption from the tax charge. Almost anything, from landscapes and buildings to clocks and snuff boxes can be *eligible*. A panel of experts at the Capital Taxes Office makes the decision.

● The exemption is conditional on the item being *kept in the United King*dom, preserved in good condition and with "reasonable public access". If rules are broken, the tax bill will hit the owner's doormat.

● The public access condition can be met by permanently lending the work to a gallery, exhibiting it in a room open to the public on an agreed number of days each year, or by agreeing to allow private viewing by appointment.

● There are currently *14,443 works on the register* — a breakdown by type is shown in the graphic (left). The cost to the nation in lost tax is £60 million, implying that works on the list are worth in total £150 million.

● Computerised databases of the list are available, which allow searches by artist, type of work or geographical area.

Gillian Varley, head of public services at the Victoria and Albert Museum, said: "People going on holiday to Dorset come and look *at it to see what there is* down there." As well as the V&A, the register can be consulted at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff and the Ulster Museum in Belfast.

*The***Guardian** **Weekly**

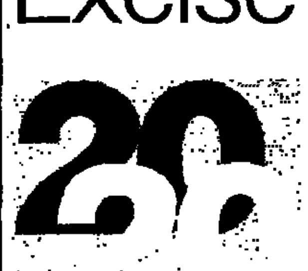
Subscribe to a more interesting point of view

with Britain's best international news weekly

The Guardian Weekly Subscription Rates	6 months	1 year
United Kingdom...........	£24.00	£47.00
Europe (inc. Eire)........	£26.50	£52.00
USA, Canada..............	£28.00	£55.00
Rest of the World.........	£30.50	£60.00

to: The Guardian Weekly, 164 Deansgate, Manchester M60 2RR
Please mail The Guardian Weekly for ☐ 6 months ☐ 1 year to:–
Name.......................................
Address.......................................sc2
Subscription ordered by.......................................
Address if not as above.......................................
Please tick if this is a renewal order ☐
I enclose payment of £...............
by ☐ Sterling cheque drawn on U.K. bank payable to 'The Guardian Weekly'
☐ Please debit my *Visa/MasterCard/Amex*
a/c
Cardholder's signature....................... Card expiry date...............
☐ I prefer not to receive promotional offers from selected companies
Credit card orders may be sent to fax no: 0161 876 5362

Excise black market



Ian King

TUESDAY saw the launch of the Customs Alliance, a well meaning link between Customs & Excise and 18 trade bodies, aimed at pooling information and resources to stamp *out* tobacco and alcohol smuggling.

The threat the Alliance has been set up to fight is far from being a romantic, swashbuckling 'Ah-har, me hearties' affair. It is organised crime, and while the buccaneers of the black economy claim they are creating business — for van hire firms, ferry companies and the rest — they are really *destroying* jobs and threatening pubs and corner shops.

The taxpayer is losing out, *too. It is estimated by* the tobacco industry — Customs refuses to publish any figures — that smuggling of hand-rolling tobacco alone will cost the Treasury £370 *million in lost revenue this* year. That has to be made up.

Likewise, the brewers reckon 366,000 pints of beer are sold illegally in Britain daily. The problem for the fags 'n' booze trade is that the loss to the Treasury is not big enough to warrant jacking up the Customs budget to pay for extra customs officers. Accordingly, Valerie Strachan, the estimable Customs chief, is forced into cobbling together schemes like the Customs Alliance — a set-up which even the brewers admit will be just a drop in the ocean of illegal alcohol.

At the same time, the Treasury, desperate to dole out election-winning tax cuts, is unlikely to do anything about the astonishing gap between British and continental excise duties.

Never mind, Treasury mandarins argue, we can always use the health argument for ratcheting up the tax on a packet of 20. Yet even those of us not addicted to the weed can see this is grossly unfair. Tobacco taxation is highly regressive — the poorest households in the country *who smoke spend 27 per* cent of their income on tobacco each year.

Equally, there is an economic effect. The two tax increases on tobacco last year were *enough to stick* another 0.2 per cent on the headline inflation rate. That may not seem much, but when overall inflation was 2.2 per cent, it begins to look significant.

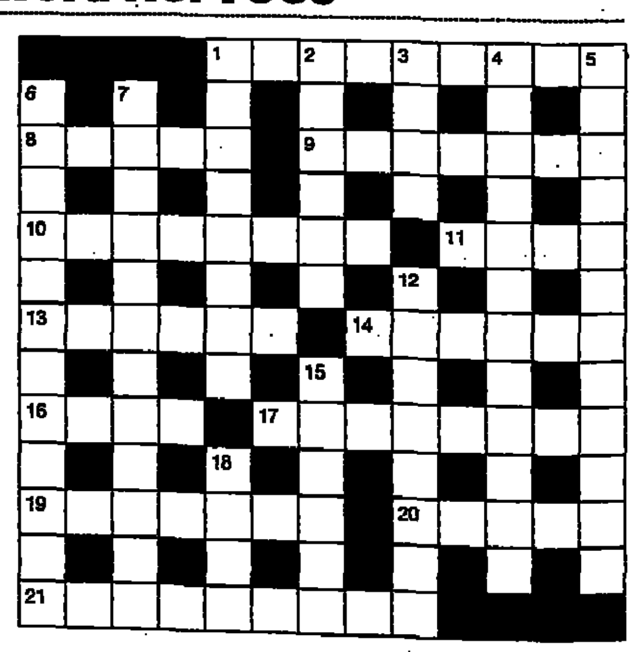
The same case can be made for booze, with pensioners, unskilled workers and the unemployed drinking around 40 per cent more beer than professionals. And VAT on alcohol, being levied after duty, is in effect a tax on a tax.

Mr Clarke should call time on the annual increase in excise on tobacco and alcohol. There is a precedent — in 1959, Derrick Heathcoat-Amory, a Tory Chancellor, reduced duty by 22 per cent. No wonder his boss, Harold MacMillan, said we'd never had it so good.

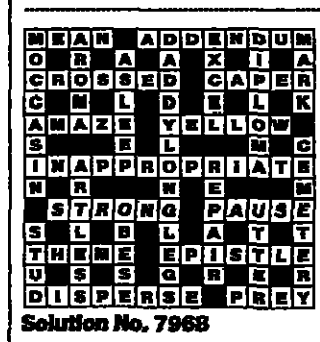
Ah yes, the health lobby will say, what about the cost to the NHS of treating all those smokers and drinkers. Never mind that tobacco and alcohol duty are hefty contributors to the NHS.

If the Treasury is so keen to raise more revenue from these sectors, the solution is simple: expand the Customs budget. *This would* create more jobs, and divert money from the black economy to the real economy. What's more, it would create a real feel-good factor.

Quick Crossword No. 7969



Solution No. 7968



Across

1 Established course of action (9)
8 Passenger ship (5)
9 Immediate — sort of coffee? (7)
10 Inborn (8)
11 Blemish (4)
13 Seashell, used as money (6)
14 Decent (6)
16 Monster (4)
17 Provisions (8)
19 Pagan (7)
20 Criminal (5)
21 Globe-shaped (9)

Down

1 Painting of a person (8)
2 The East (6)
3 Comfort (4)
4 Inadmissible (12)
5 Adventurous (12)
6 Multi (5-7)
7 In a very angry mood (2,3,7)
12 Appreciative (8)
15 Outdoor meal (6)
18 Overcook — fish — daily (4)

© Published by Guardian Newspapers Limited at 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and at 164 Deansgate, Manchester M60 2RR. Printed at the Guardian Press Centre, 2 Millharbour, London E14 9NG: Trafford Park Printers, Longbridge Road, Manchester M17 1SL: Ter-Druckerei GmbH, Admiral-Rosendahl-Strasse 1, 6078 Neu-Isenburg/Zeppelinheim, Germany: Nord Eclair, 15/21 rue du Caire, BP69 - 59052 Roubaix, Cedex 1, France, for and on behalf of the Guardian and Manchester Evening News PLC. 46,396. Saturday November 11, 1995.
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office ISSN 0261-307

London:
Telephone 0171-278 2332.
Telex 8811746 (Guard G)
Fax 0171-837 2114; 0171-833 8342.
Telephone sales 0171-611 9000
Manchester: Tel 0161-832 7200.
Fax 0161-832 5351/834 9717.
Tel sales 0161-834 8686